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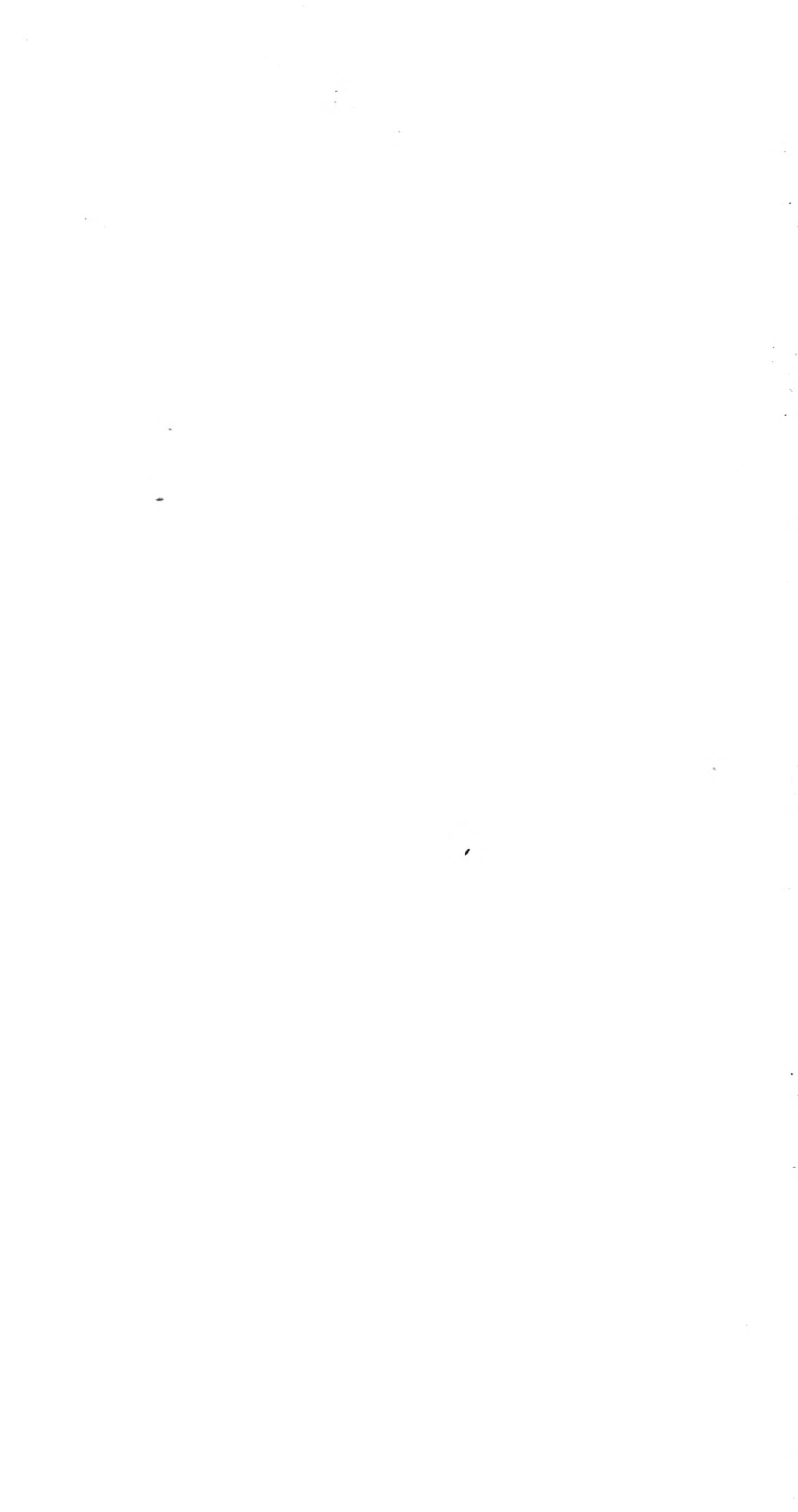
II

Section

2

Number

450





1750-1751

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
MR. ABRAHAM BOOTH,
LATE
PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH
IN
LITTLE PRESCOT-STREET, GOODMAN'S FIELDS, LONDON.

By WILLIAM JONES.

“Of his learning and his talents, he had exhibited such decisive and brilliant proofs, as to place above question his uncommon acquisitions and powers, and, undoubtedly, to make him the centre of an extended circle of admiration.”——DR. SYMMONS'S LIFE OF MILTON.

LIVERPOOL,
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
BY JAMES SMITH;

And sold by W. Button, and J. Barditt, Paternoster-row; also by Williams and Smith, Stationer's Court, London; by J. Dunn, Nottingham; Guthrie and Tait, Edinburgh; J. and A. Duncan, Glasgow; James Thompson and Son, and Mrs. Richardson, Manchester; and by Woodward and Alderson, Castle-street, Liverpool.

PRICE FOUR SHILLINGS.

1808.

TO
HIS MUCH HONOURED
BENEFactor AND FRIEND,
MR. JOSEPH CRANT:
AS A
SMALL, BUT VERY SINCERE
TRIBUTE OF GRATITUDE,
FOR THE
MANY OBLIGATIONS HE OWES HIM;
THIS ESSAY
IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,
AND KINSMAN,
THE AUTHOR.

HOPE-PLACE,
Liverpool, January 20, 1808.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following pages have been compiled from such materials as the writer has been supplied with, by some personal knowledge of Mr. Booth, an intimate acquaintance with his writings, and the additional information collected from his surviving friends. To Dr. Rippon's Memoir, he also confesses himself under considerable obligations. He is fully sensible of the disadvantages he has laboured under, not only in consequence of his remote residence from the Metropolis, but also from the inadequacy of his talents, to do justice to the task which has been imposed upon him. The only merit he claims is that of impartiality. Having never had any religious connection with Mr. Booth, or with any society belonging to the denomination of English Baptists, his pen has not moved at the impulse of party zeal; and if he have spoken favourably of the character which he undertook to delineate, he wishes the reader to understand, that what he has said is the award of an unbiassed and disinterested mind. For

the rest, he throws himself upon his candour and indulgence.

What reception this tract may meet with from the public, the writer, though not wholly indifferent about it, does not undertake to conjecture. To himself, indeed, it owes nothing; for, under circumstances of deep and complicated distress, he has found, in the contemplation of so many virtues as were concentrated in the subject of his memoir, an asylum for his thoughts against the hateful shafts of treachery and malevolence, and, what is worse, against the chilling blasts of black ingratitude.

When our countryman, MILTON, under the loss of his sight, was reviled by his enemies, as “a miserable old man,” he very properly replied, that “that man alone was miserable, who could not bear adversity with fortitude.” Were it in the power of the writer of this Essay to command the return of any portion of his past days, notwithstanding the frown of the world, his attention would in all probability, be first directed to the few weeks which have been spent in tracing the history, and in recording the virtues, of the venerable ABRAHAM BOOTH.

ESSAY
ON THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
MR. ABRAHAM BOOTH.

AMONG the many advantages which result from recording the lives and actions of such persons as have filled conspicuous stations in the world or in the church, it is certainly none of the least that their biography, when properly related, eminently serves to assist us in that important science THE STUDY OF MAN. It is equally true, that those characters in biography are the most instructing and animating, in which we see persevering efforts overcoming the most formidable obstacles, and distinguished eminence gradually rising out of obscurity and depression. Such, indeed, is the discipline through which some of the greatest names among mankind have passed; and it may be asserted, that none of the original favourites of nature and fortune have attained a superiority so solid and

durable as that acquired by such a course of probation. The application of these remarks to the subject upon which we are now about to enter, will appear sufficiently obvious from the sequel.

MR. ABRAHAM BOOTH, the well-known author of the *REIGN OF GRACE*, was born at Blackwell, in Derbyshire, on the 20th of May, 1734, O. S.* While he was in the first year of his age, his father removed from Blackwell, to a small farm belonging to the Duke of Portland, situated at Annesley Woodhouse, a small hamlet in the parish of Annesley, in Nottinghamshire. Of a numerous family of children, Abraham was the eldest, and here he passed the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life, assisting his father in the management of the farming business. To whatever circumstance it were owing, whether to the inability of the father to give his son the common advantages of education, arising from the largeness of his family, connected with his limited means, or, as is more

* As the account here given of the earlier part of Mr. Booth's history will be found to differ in several particulars from that given by Dr. Rippon, in his *Memoir*, published soon after Mr. B.'s death, it is proper to state, that the present narrative is founded upon the very best authority, viz. that of Mr. Robert Booth, brother of the deceased, who is now living at Kirby Woodhouse, at a personal interview with the writer.

probable, to there being no school in the neighbourhood, the fact is unquestionable, that he did not enjoy those advantages; for, until the period of his relinquishing the farming business, he never spent six months at school. He was indebted for the knowledge of the English alphabet to his parent alone, whose practice it was, unless prevented by the urgent calls of business, to hear him his lesson every day after dinner. The disadvantages, however, which he was thus subjected to, in the acquisition of the first rudiments of education, were easily surmounted. The activity and energy of his mind, which were so eminently conspicuous throughout every period of his life, began very early to develope themselves. To his own industry he was indebted for the attainment of the art of writing, in which he made considerable proficiency, as well as in the science of arithmetic. What circumstance gave occasion to his relinquishing the pursuit of agriculture, does not appear. It has been stated that, “when he commenced the work of the ministry, he thought he should be more independent, and better able to command his time, by learning to work in the stocking frame.” But this statement is incorrect, for he began to apply himself to this latter business two or three years before he commenced public speaker. It is not at all im-

probable, however, that he was induced to change his mode of life, by the hope of being more at liberty to prosecute his studies, and with less interruption,—an object to which, at this period, he became visibly devoted;* many of the hours which were by the rest of the family spent in sleep, being occupied by him in the acquisition of knowledge.

The parents of Mr. Booth were professedly members of the established church, which he himself also attended for worship until he was about ten or eleven years of age. At this juncture, his own attention, and that of his family, were arrested by the discourses of some plain, illiterate, and self-taught preachers, belonging to the denomination of General Baptists, who occasionally visited Annesley. Mr. Booth gave early marks of piety, and when very young was frequently overheard in private prayer. It has been mentioned by himself, that he had a solemn and abiding concern for the salvation of his soul when he was about eleven years of age. The impressions on his mind were lasting, and increased as he grew to years of man-

* The account given by Mr. Venn of Mr. Booth's early history, appears very incorrect. He says "he was put *apprentice* by his father,"—and speaks of "serving out his time, &c." The fact is, as we are assured, that he learnt the business of a stockinger, without being an articulated apprentice.

hood. At length he determined to take his lot with the General Baptists, and accordingly was baptised at Barton, by Mr. Francis Smith, on a personal profession of his faith.

As Mr. Booth possessed good natural abilities, and appeared qualified to assist in the spreading of the Gospel, his friends soon urged him to join them in the sacred work. He complied with their desires, and was, in a short time, considered as a leading person among them. They proceeded with great zeal and success in spreading the glad tidings of salvation amongst their ignorant neighbours.—Multitudes in the adjacent towns and villages were roused to a sense of their lost condition, and directed to look to a dying Saviour for deliverance. In this labour of love, he bore an active and useful part. To use the words of one of his associates, yet living, who had the honour to be baptised with him,* “He was well approved in the churches; was a solid, good preacher; and zealous for the good of souls, and the cause of Christ. He frequently was at Melbourne, Barton, Loughborough, Diseworth, and other places, preaching the freeness and fulness of the Gospel, in villages, twenty, thirty, or forty miles from his own home.”

* Mr William Corah, of Longwhatton.

Nor ought the disinterestedness which was so conspicuously displayed by Mr. Booth and his associates in these benevolent exertions, to be passed over without notice. For several years their labours were restricted to the poor and careless inhabitants of country cottages, who neither invited nor desired their instructions; and from whom, therefore, they could rationally expect no other recompense than ridicule, calumny, and persecution. Till societies were formed, their exertions were gratuitous; and, like the first preachers of the word, *their own hands ministered to their necessities.*

But Mr. Booth was not likely to continue a mechanic. When arrived at the age of twenty-three or twenty-four years, he married Miss Elizabeth Bowmar, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, by whom he had a numerous issue; almost every revolution of the Seasons, for the space of nine or ten years after their marriage, bringing him the addition of a son or daughter to his family. The powers of his mind, however, which had hitherto been vigorously employed in the acquisition of useful knowledge, had now attained a considerable degree of maturity; and he concluded that it would be conducive to his own improvement, as well as more congenial to his disposition, to employ himself in imparting that knowledge to others. He,

therefore, opened a school at Sutton Ashfield, about two miles distant from Kirby, in conducting which he was materially assisted by Mrs. Booth, who, having had considerable advantages of education, was qualified, beyond most young women of her rank in life, for instructing the female part of the seminary in the useful branches of needle-work. They proposed taking boarders also, but this part of their plan met with slender encouragement, for the number rarely exceeded three.

In 1760, the religious profession in which Mr. Booth was now engaged, had so far extended itself, that it was thought adviseable to form distinct churches, under the care of those preachers whose local situation, &c. enabled them to watch over particular districts with more convenience. The society of Kirby Woodhouse was of course submitted to the superintendence of Mr. B. who continued to labour among them, for several years, with considerable acceptance and success.* And in

* It is necessary again to correct a statement of Dr. Rippon's, who says, he was *ordained* over this Society. But the fact is, that Mr. B. was *not* ordained over that or any other society, except the one in Prescot-street, Goodman's Fields, London, among whom he laboured till the day of his death. And it is the more needful to set this matter right, as from the ambiguous note which occurs at the bottom of page 52 of the

the regulation of these newly formed societies he was highly instrumental. In the same year, he assisted at the ordination of Messrs. F. Smith and T. Parkins over the General Baptist church at Melbourne; and delivered an impressive and useful charge to the pastors, from Acts xx. 28. *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, &c.*

And here we are brought to notice a memorable circumstance in the history of Mr. Booth, viz. the change which took place in his religious sentiments. Hitherto he had held the doctrine of *Universal Redemption*, and was a strenuous advocate for the universality of divine grace. In the fervour of his zeal for what he at that time esteemed truth, he wrote a poem “on Absolute Predestination,” in which he vehemently opposed the doctrine of election, reproaching it in terms of the bitterest enmity and contempt. Of this production, he, how-

Doctor’s Memoir, some might be led to suspect that Mr. Booth’s removal from Sutton Ashfield to London, bore some affinity to the practices, which, we are sorry to say, are too often found among dissenters, of ministers quitting their pastoral charge, solely for *filthy lucre’s sake*. In this instance, the character of Mr. B. is out of the reach of suspicion. He had no pastoral charge to relinquish, and of course it was unnecessary for Dr. R. to apprise his readers that his removal was conducted in “a truly honourable way.”

ever, afterwards thus records his own judgment: "As a poem, if considered in a critical light, it is despicable; if in a theological view, detestable; as it is an impotent attack on the honour of divine grace, in respect to its glorious freeness, and a bold opposition to the sovereignty of God, and *as such I renounce it.*" The piece is, indeed, richly entitled to all that Mr. B. has said of it; and the only apology that can be offered, if such a farrago of impiety can admit of apology at all, is, that he wrote it when only twenty years of age. It serves, however, by way of contrast, to demonstrate the revolution which afterwards took place in the author's judgment, upon the most important of all subjects, the character of THE SUPREME BEING !

There is a natural curiosity in the human mind to inquire by what means a change of this nature was produced; but MR. BOOTH himself, has given us no clue in his writings to direct our researches. He has been accused, by one of his contemporaries, of imbibing a part of his religious sentiments from SANDEMAN; but let us inquire dispassionately into the justice of this accusation, and see to what it will amount. The "Letters on Theron and Aspasio" were first published in the year 1757, and excited considerable attention throughout England. It is natural to suppose that

a person of Mr. Booth's character, continually athirst for knowledge, would be eager to look into a work which was, for a time, the universal topic of conversation among religious parties. That he had perused the publication with attention, is sufficiently apparent from the *Reign of Grace* ; nor is it, in the smallest degree, derogatory to his character, to suppose that it might lead him to review his religious sentiments, and call his attention to the oracles of truth. The views of *DIVINE GRACE*, in its sovereignty, riches, and freedom, so clearly stated, so strikingly illustrated, and supported by such invincible force of argument, throughout the *Reign of Grace*, may also be found in the Letters on Theron and Aspasio ; but are they not also to be found in the Old and New Testament ? It would be difficult to show in what other material respect the sentiments of the two writers exactly coincide. Assuredly, not on the article of *justifying faith* ; for while Mr. Sandeman insisted that it was nothing more than *the bare belief of the bare truth*, Mr. Booth uniformly connected with it, and as entering into its essence, the idea of *trust* and *reliance*. But if on this subject they were differently minded, still less will it be pretended, that Mr. Booth adopted Mr. Sandeman's views of the ordinance of Baptism, or the general order of a Christian church.

The fact is, that he was an original thinker; he read, compared, and judged for himself; and he possessed a mind too upright and independent to become the follower of any man, any further than he perceived him following CHRIST. The change in his religious sentiments, then, was the honourable fruit of deep conviction, and thus we find his own pen recording it. “The doctrine of *sovereign, distinguishing grace*,—as commonly and justly stated by Calvinists—it must be acknowledged, is too generally exploded. This the writer of these pages knows by experience, to his grief and shame. Through the *ignorance* of his mind, the *pride* of his heart, and the *prejudice* of his education, he, in his younger years, often opposed it with much warmth, though with no small degree of weakness; but after an *impartial inquiry*, and *many prayers*, he found reason to alter his judgment; he found it to be the doctrine of the Bible, and a dictate of the unerring spirit. Thus patronized, he received the once obnoxious sentiment, under a *full conviction* of its being a divine truth.”*

The consequences of this change of mind, on a doctrine which enters so deeply into the whole system of revealed truth, the reader will easily

* Death of Legal Hope, &c. p. 45.

anticipate. *How shall two walk together, except they be agreed*, especially upon a subject so important as the character of the object of their worship! The change was soon observed, and produced considerable uneasiness in the minds of his friends. They valued his character, and approved his ministry. Several meetings were held, to examine the difference that subsisted between them, and each party produced what arguments they were able in defence of their respective tenets; but as neither could convince the other, they mutually agreed to part. But although an end was thus put to Mr. Booth's public ministrations among the General Baptists, and to all religious fellowship between him and them, he carried with him a warm esteem for the friends from whom he had separated, which he retained till his death, and which they returned as cordially during his long and useful life. In vindication of the principles of Christian integrity which governed his conduct on this occasion, he chose, as the foundation of his farewell sermon, part of the parable of the unjust steward; which naturally led him to observe that fraud and concealment of different kinds may obtain the friendship of man—that when friendship is obtained by such means, he who gains it, and they who grant it, are chargeable with injustice

peculiarly to be execrated; and, that scripture, reason, and conscience, join their authority in recommending universal fidelity to accountable creatures, and especially to the ministers and professors of religion, in prospect of the final audit, when they must all give up their stewardship, and be no longer stewards.

Mr. Booth's separation from the General Baptists occasioned a temporary interruption to his public labours; but in a little while he began again to preach in a room at Sutton Ashfield, called Bore's Hall, which was licensed for that purpose. At this place, in process of time he collected a small society of the Calvinistic, or Particular Baptist denomination, and there it was that he composed that excellent treatise—*THE REIGN OF GRACE*. The substance of it was originally delivered in a series of discourses, first at Sutton Ashfield, and many of them afterwards at Nottingham and Chesterfield, at both of which towns he for some years was in the practice of preaching on alternate sabbaths. During this period, the exertions of Mr. Booth must have been truly astonishing. When we consider that he had, throughout the week, to labour for the support of a family every year increasing, and now become numerous; that he had to go a distance of twelve or fifteen miles to preach

every Lord's day, for which, the only remuneration he received was barely the expenses of horse hire, at no time, it is believed, exceeding ten pounds a year; and when we take into account that it was under these unfavourable circumstances he found time to write **THE REIGN OF GRACE**, we may not improperly apply to him, what the Apostle Paul says of himself—that he *laboured more abundantly than they all*; and may we not with equal propriety add, as the Apostle does upon the same occasion, *yet not he, but the Grace of God which was with him*. And here we may take occasion to remark, as one of the peculiar excellencies of the Gospel of the Grace of God,—as what displays its glory, and manifests its power,—that the more the mind is filled with it, humbling the sinner, emptying him of all his self-sufficiency, and reducing him to an entire dependence on the grace and strength that are in Christ Jesus, the more it diffuses into the mind solid joy and happiness, and excites to the most vigorous exertions—to spend and be spent for the Saviour's sake. So it was with the Apostle Paul. The love of Christ, in giving himself up to the death of the cross for his salvation, appeared marvellous in his eyes, and took deep hold of his heart and affections. It inflamed his love to the Divine Saviour, and to his

fellow sinners, for the Saviour's sake ; it raised him above himself, and led him to count his own life not dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the Grace of God. And such, in a measure, were the effects which the discovery of the love of God in our redemption, had upon the mind and conduct of Mr. Booth. When we look into the Reign of Grace, and examine which were the subjects that occupied his public ministrations at that time, *viz.* the nature and properties of DIVINE GRACE ; when we behold him tracing that Grace, in all its glorious progress and rich aboundings, as reigning in our Election—Effectual Calling—Justification Adoption—Sanctification—Perseverance—and at last crowning the sinner with Eternal Glory, we may safely conclude that “ the word of Christ dwelt richly in him,” and that he spoke of these things out of the abundance of his heart, bringing forth that which was good to the use of edifying, and which *ministered Grace to the hearers.*

The circumstances which more immediately led to the publication of this work, are sufficiently interesting to be here recorded. When the author had prepared his manuscript, one of his friends, who had probably heard him deliver the sub-

stance of the work from the pulpit, and could appreciate its value, happening to be at Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, called upon Mr. Henry Venn, a clergyman of Evangelical sentiments, and of considerable respectability, to whom he mentioned Mr. Booth's intended publication, and gave such an account of it as excited in Mr. Venn an eager desire to peruse it. It was accordingly transmitted to him, and so highly was he led to approve the work, and to value the author, that he made a purposed-journey from Huddersfield to Sutton Ashfield, in Post-chaise, that he might enjoy the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him.—And here commenced an intimacy which ripened into friendship, and which subsisted with unabated ardour through life. The liberal mind will contemplate with pleasure, the attachment which subsisted between these worthy men. Mr. Venn some time afterwards removed into Huntingdonshire, and Mr. Booth to London, but no change in their situations produced any diminution of their friendship. They kept up a correspondence, and whenever Mr. Booth had occasion to visit that quarter of the country where his friend lived, he never failed to call upon him, and take up his abode at *the Parsonage house*. Nor was the good Vicar less inclined to call upon Mr. B. when in

London. Indeed, to prove the mutual esteem and attachment in which they held each other, no other evidence need to be adduced than the recital of the following anecdote, which Mr. Booth has often been heard to relate with much apparent pleasure. On one of his visits to Mr. Venn, after his removal to Huntingdonshire, the latter gentleman expressed great anxiety to hear his friend preach, but was some time at a loss how to get it accomplished. At length, he addressed him in the following manner: “I dare not introduce you into my pulpit—but I will make you a pulpit in my own kitchen, and procure you a congregation, and there you shall preach to us.” The project was immediately carried into effect, and the author of the *Essay on the Kingdom of Christ*—the determined opposer of all religious establishments, was seen and heard holding forth the divine testimony under the roof of a dignitary of the national church!

But to return from this digression. The publication of the *Reign of Grace* was warmly urged by Mr. Venn, who wrote a recommendatory preface to the book, which accompanied the first and second editions, but which, when the work began to be extensively known, it was thought unnecessary to continue. The publication first made its

appearance in April, 1768, and attracted general regard. The particular Baptist church in Prescott-street, Goodman's Fields, London, at this juncture lost their pastor, Mr. Samuel Burford, and were consequently led to look out for a successor.—Some of the members of the church accidentally meeting with the Reign of Grace, were highly pleased with the performance, and came to the resolution of taking a journey to Sutton Ashfield to hear him. As Mr. Booth had it in contemplation to visit London shortly after, they invited him to spend a Lord's day or two among the people with whom they stood connected, to which he acceded, and in the month of June, preached three Sabbaths for them. When about to leave, he was invited to grant them further assistance, with which also he complied; and after visiting his own family, he returned to London, and preached four weeks more among them. The result was, that on the 18th September, “the Church unanimously agreed to give him a call to the pastoral office.” In a letter dated October 1, 1768, he accepted the call, and on the 16th February, 1769, he was ordained by *the laying on of hands*, which mode of induction to the Pastoral office he always encouraged, considering it essential to a regular ordination, wherever the means of enjoying it could be obtained.

Mr. Booth's removal to London may be considered as forming a new and important epoch in the history of his life. The change which he underwent in his translation from a country village to the metropolis of the kingdom, must have been striking even to himself. From preaching to a small body of unlettered peasants, in a country barn, or humble school-room, to be called to the discharge of the Pastoral office, over one of the most respectable congregations in London, must have deeply impressed him with the importance of the trust, and have stimulated a vigorous mind to the improvement of its faculties. What effects such a change might have had upon the spirit and conduct of many weak but well meaning men, we may form some tolerably correct judgment of, from instances that have occurred to our own observation. There is as much truth as beauty in the Poet's exclamation:—

“ Oh! how portentous is prosperity!

How, comet-like, it threatens while it shines.”

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

To preserve ourselves from pride and high-mindedness, while the world is smiling upon us, requires something more than the dictates of nature, or the lessons of Philosophy; and Mr. Booth's deportment, under these circumstances, demon-

strated that his conduct was regulated by nobler principles. Convinced that there yet remained much for him to learn, he rejoiced that Providence had now favoured him with auspicious opportunities of increasing his knowledge, and, forgetting his present attainments, he became almost insatiable in his thirst for information; so that he seems to have formed the determination which Dr. Owen formerly made, that if learning were attainable, he would, by the blessing of God, possess it. Hitherto, his acquirements had carried him little beyond the rudiments of English Grammar; but after his residence in London, he was considerably indebted to the erudition of an eminent classical scholar, who had been a Roman Catholic Priest. The tutor came in a morning to visit his pupil, and after breakfasting together, they usually retired into the study for business. Of the talents of this gentleman, Mr. Booth was accustomed to speak in very high terms; and we may be fully assured that, thus aided, the improvement of the pupil would be very rapid. This, indeed, was the only assistance, worth mentioning, that Mr. B. ever enjoyed, and with this exception, he might be fairly denominated a self-taught scholar.

In devoting his leisure hours to the attainment of the languages, however, he never lost sight of

the important ends of his office, as a minister of the Gospel. He uniformly acted upon a plan, keeping his attention steadily fixt upon those studies, which he knew his peculiar situation as a Christian Pastor, would enable him to convert to the most useful purposes. To become a profound metaphysician, or an adept in the higher branches of the mathematics, was never the object of his ambition. He made no pretensions to the character of an accomplished Hebrean, or to any intimate acquaintance with the Oriental languages. But he perused, and obtained an easy access to the exhaustless stores of Theology, published upon the Continent of Europe, and especially of those that are to be met with in the voluminous writings of the most eminent professors who have filled the chairs of foreign universities among the reformed churches, such as Witsius, Turretine, Stapferus, Vitringa, and Venema. Few men of his time could pretend to be so deeply read in the Popish controversy; and the fruits of his reading may be seen in the dexterity with which he has employed the best arguments, by which the Reformation was defended, in favour of his own sentiment as an Antipædobaptist. He was familiarly acquainted with the writers of Ecclesiastical History—Dupin, Cave, Bingham, Venema, Span-

heim, and the Magdeburg Centuriators. As to Jewish Antiquities, he made Lewis, Jennings, Reland, Spencer, Ikenius, Carpzovius, Fabricius of Hamburgh, and other writers of the same class, very much his own. It ought also to be recorded, that, among his favourites at home, Dr. John Owen, formerly Vice Chancellor of Oxford, was an author to whose learned works, and evangelical writings, he has, in various ways, often acknowledged himself to be indebted. That his acquaintance with these elaborate writers, and others of equally distinguished celebrity, was not that of a mere sciolist, consisting in names and dates, is clearly demonstrable by the use he made of them in discussing the Baptismal controversy, which will remain, for ages, a lasting memorial of the extent of his reading, as well as of the depth of his own penetration.

What exertions, both bodily and mental, it must have cost him to make his way through the long and toilsome road to the temple of knowledge, but few readers are capable of estimating. He is said to have committed to memory all the English part of Littleton's Latin Dictionary, a drudgery which, of itself, would have occupied the whole life of a man of ordinary memory. Nor ought we to wonder if, on a review of the tedious path he

had trodden, and generally without companion or guide, he was at times tempted to lament, in the language of the celebrated Dr. Johnson, that his studies had not been conducted under Academical bowers. But his first connexions, early marriage, a growing family, and other incidents, placed this desideratum out of his reach. Yet, under greater disadvantages than perhaps fell to the lot of any of his contemporary brethren, we behold him rising above them all, and bearing away the palm of superior attainments. “Fame,” says the author of the *Rambler*, “is not conferred but as the recompense of labour; and that labour, vigorously continued, has not often failed of its reward.”—Let his example teach others, that a body of useful knowledge and learning may be attained, in almost any situation, by unremitted diligence and perseverance, if the Lord please to grant health and vigour, even when the regular, the easiest, and most direct means of acquiring them, are not to be enjoyed.

But the talents of Mr. Booth, thus matured, were not destined, as is, alas! too often the case with men of eminent attainments,

“To waste their fragrance on the desert air,”
much less were they applied to the baneful purposes of corrupting the heavenly doctrine of divine

grace, and thereby injuring the immortal interests of his fellow sinners. They were consecrated to the service of his Divine Master, as will be abundantly manifest from a concise review of the different publications with which he favoured the world after his settlement in London.

In the year 1770, appeared the first edition of a tract entitled, “ *The death of Legal Hope, the life of Evangelical obedience,*” intended, no doubt, as a supplement to “ *The Reign of Grace.*” This treatise is an elucidation of Gal. ii. 19, *I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*; and is dedicated to the church over which he was pastor. His leading object, in this discourse, is to evince that a sinner must become dead to the law, as a covenant of works, or as to all hope of procuring acceptance with God through his own righteousness, before he can possibly live unto God in acceptable obedience. Having illustrated this doctrine by a chain of connected and masterly reasoning, he proceeds to show, that believers are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ; that the moral law, which is the unalterable standard of righteousness, and the sum of whose requirements is perfect love to God and man, must, under every dispensation, maintain its obligation, and be the rule of duty to rational beings.

“Nor,” as he justly observes, “has the true believer any objection to it, or any fears from it, thus considered. It is no longer *a fiery law*, thundering out anathemas, and flashing vengeance against him. No; it is mild and gentle. He sees that its precepts are highly salutary, and its prohibitions exactly right. He does not wish to have them altered. Love to God and our neighbour is a compendium of its precepts: and in the exercise of that love he desires to abound. As to its prohibitions, he knows that the things forbidden would be an injury to him, were they pursued; therefore, he esteems it his happiness to abstain from them. The new disposition, received in regeneration, expresses itself in love to God, and in obedience to his law, as pure and holy. The Gospel furnishes him with the strongest arguments, and the most winning motives to abound in obedience; while it is his earnest prayer, that the Spirit of Grace would afford effectual assistance for the performance of every duty. It is his greatest grief, that he does not more constantly, and more perfectly, transcribe the sacred precepts into his conduct, and cause them to shine in his own example.

“Besides, the believer beholds the law, not in the hands of Moses, and as surrounded with the flames of Sinai, but in the hands of that Prince of Peace who is King in Zion. He sees that the dear, adorable, and ascended Jesus, having fulfilled its high demands as a covenant, and released him from its awful curses, now employs it as an instrument of his benign government, for the good of the redeemed, and the glory of his own eternal name. As in the hand of Christ, it is a friend and a guide, pointing out the way in

which a Christian should walk, so as to express his gratitude to God for his benefits, and to glorify the Redeemer. It shows him, also, how imperfect his own obedience is; and so is a happy mean of keeping him humble at the foot of Sovereign Grace, and entirely dependent on the righteousness of his Divine Sponsor."

Thus did he contend for the perpetual obligation of the divine law, as the rule of righteousness in the Redeemer's kingdom; and thus did he, by sound doctrine, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,—for such have been found, in all ages of the church, disputing about the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

About this time, a controversy was set on foot, which continued for several years, on the subject of the Divinity of the Son of God. Several clergymen of note, in the Church of England, resigned their livings, because they could not conscientiously conform to Trinitarian worship. Mr. Booth, whose attention was always awake to whatever regarded the glory of his Divine Master, republished a valuable treatise, entitled "*The Deity of Jesus Christ essential to the Christian Religion.*" The work was originally written by Dr. Abbadie, in French, and was in the highest estimation among the Protestants on the Continent. It is an elabo-

rate treatise, and enters deeply into a refutation of the whole Socinian hypothesis. An English translation had already appeared, many years before, in this country; but Mr. Booth, by revising, correcting, and in some places abridging the work, conferred upon it a superior degree of perspicuity and energy, which much enhanced its value and acceptableness with his countrymen.

In 1778, he published “AN APOLOGY FOR THE BAPTISTS, *in which they are vindicated from the imputation of laying an unwarrantable stress on the ordinance of Baptism; and against the charge of Bigotry, in refusing communion at the Lord’s table to Pædobaptists.*” About the middle of the seventeenth century, some few Baptists in England, of whom John Bunyan was one of the first, introduced the practice of what is called mixed or free communion,—contending that the want of baptism ought to be no bar to communicating in the Lord’s supper, and acted in conformity with that opinion. This practice, which had prevailed more or less among some Baptist societies ever since Bunyan’s days, was now apparently gaining ground. Two pieces had recently been published, in favour of the practice, under the feigned names of PACIFICUS and CANDIDUS, but in reality by MR. D. TURNER, of Abingdon, and MR. JOHN

RYLAND, of Northampton, both ministers of the Baptist persuasion. In support of this opinion, those writers urged the propriety, the utility, and the necessity of bearing with one another's mistakes in matters that are *not essential*, among which they included the ordinance of baptism. Mr. Booth, to exculpate himself, together with a great majority of his brethren, of the Baptist denomination, from charges of an odious nature, endeavours to show that they cannot receive Pædobaptists into communion, at the Lord's table, without doing violence to their principles as Baptists ; and answers the principal objections which their opponents allege against them. " While our brethren," says he, " revere the authority by which the Apostles acted, and while they believe that infant sprinkling is not baptism, they are obliged, in virtue of those ancient precedents, and by all that is amiable in a consistent conduct, to admit none to communion, at the Lord's table, whom they do not consider as really baptised, according to the command of Christ."

In this publication, Mr. Booth displayed not only the extensiveness of his reading, but very extraordinary talents as a disputant. Nor ought that to be considered as the least valuable part of his treatise, in which he enters his protest against

that illegitimate *charity*, the idol of thousands in all ages, which is equally complaisant to truth and falsehood,—which esteems sincerity in error as equivalent to soundness in the faith. As the piece has now been long out of print, and is probably known to few only, we shall be excused in here introducing an extract or two from it.

“ It should be observed, that forbearance and love, not less than resolution and zeal, must be directed in the whole extent of their exercise, by the word of God; else we may greatly offend and become partakers of other men’s sins, by conniving when we ought to reprove. If the divine precepts, relating to love and forbearance, will apply to the case in hand; or so as to justify our connivance at an alteration, a corruption, or an omission of baptism; they will do the same in regard to the Lord’s supper. And then we are bound to bear with sincere Papists, in their mutilation of the *latter*; and to exculpate our upright friends the Quakers, in their opposition to *both*. For it cannot be proved that baptism is less fundamental than the sacred supper.—‘ There is a *false, ungodly* charity,’ says a sensible Pædobaptist writer, ‘ a strange fire, that proceeds not from the Lord; a charity that gives up the honour of religion, merely because we will not be at the pains to defend it.—Vile principles can easily cover themselves with the names of temper, charity, moderation, and forbearance; but those glorious things are not to be confounded with lukewarmness, self-seeking, laziness, or ignorance.—As there is a cloak of covetousness, so there is a cloak of fear

and cowardice.—You are never to make peace with men at the expense of any truth that is revealed to you by the great God; because that is offering up his glory in sacrifice to your own.—Do not dismember the Christian religion, but take it altogether: charity was never designed to be the tool of unbelief. See how the Spirit has connected both our principles and duties. “Follow *peace* with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord.” ’— ‘I know not that man in England,’ says Dr. Owen, ‘who is willing to go farther in forbearance, love, and communion with all that fear God, and hold the foundation, than I am: but this is *never to be done* by a condescension from the exactness of the least *apex* of gospel truth.’

Again, in reference to the immediate subject of debate, he inquires—

“But why should our brethren so earnestly plead for believers receiving the Lord’s supper, while they treat baptism as if it were a mere trifle; an appointment of Christ that might very well have been spared? What is there of obligation, of solemnity, of importance, in the former, that is not in the latter? Have they not the same divine Institutor, and the same general end? Were they not intended for the same persons, and are they not equally permanent in the church of God? And as to baptism, was [not the administration of it by John, one of the first characteristics of the Messiah’s appearance, and of the gospel dispensation commencing? Did not the King Messiah submit to it, as an example of obedience to all his followers; and most strongly recommend it to their judgment and conscience, their affections and practice, when he said, *Thus it be-*

cometh us to fulfil all righteousness? which, by the way, is more than can be asserted concerning the sacred supper; for though he instituted it with great solemnity, yet we do not read that he *partook* of it. Was not the administration of baptism so honoured at the river Jordan, when the great Immanuel submitted to it; when the eternal Father, by an audible voice, declared his approbation of it; and when the Divine Spirit descended on the head of Jesus, just emerged from the water, as no other institution ever was? And does not the divinely prescribed form of words that is used in its administration, show, that there is a peculiar solemnity, an excellence, an importance in it? while, at the same time, it suggests arguments of unanswerable force against those Antitrinitarian errors, which now so much abound. For no man who has been baptised at his own request, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, can deny that fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, without giving the lie to his baptism.

Once more: when I consider how much *more frequently* baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, than the sacred supper; how often repenting and believing sinners are *exhorted*, by the apostles, to be baptised; how soon that ordinance was administered to Christian converts after they believed; what *exhortations* are given to professing Christians, on the ground of their being baptised: and when I reflect, that the Holy Spirit *commends* them that were baptised by John, as *justifying God*; while he *severely censures* others, as *rejecting the counsel of God against themselves*, because they slighted the solemn appointment; I cannot but wonder at the language and conduct of our

opponents.—‘Their very singular conduct appears to me still more extraordinary, and yet more unwarrantable, when I reflect, that baptism is a divine institution, to which a believer submits but *once*, and a branch of divine worship, that he is required to perform but *once*; in which respect it greatly differs from every other appointment in the worship of God, under the Christian economy. For, this being the case, one should have imagined, if notorious and stubborn facts had not forbidden the thought, that *every minister* of Jesus Christ, and *every church* of the living God, would insist on a submission to what they consider as *real* baptism, in all whom they admit to the Lord’s table.’”

Mr. Booth was, shortly after this, called to take up his pen in defence of the ordinance of Baptism itself. The circumstance which gave rise to this, was the publication of a posthumous work, on the subject of infant baptism, from the pen of the celebrated Matthew Henry; edited, if we recollect rightly, by Mr. Robins, of Daventry. The popularity of Mr. Henry’s name, had conferred on this tract a degree of consequence, which rendered it improper, on the part of the Baptists, to permit it to pass without an answer. The Monthly Reviewers had pronounced it “the most popular defence of infant baptism, and of the mode of sprinkling, that had appeared.” In the year 1784, therefore, Mr. Booth published “PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED, *on the Principles, Concessions, and*

Reasonings of the most learned Pædobaptists."

He gives us an account of the origin of the work in the following words, which we extract from the preface:

"Having observed, for a course of years, that many of the most learned and eminent Pædobaptists, when theological subjects are under discussion, frequently argue on such principles, admit of such facts, interpret various texts of scripture in such a manner, and make such concessions, as are greatly in favour of the Baptists; I extracted a number of passages from their publications, and made many references to others, which I thought might be fairly pleaded against infant sprinkling. On reviewing these quotations and *memoranda*, I concluded, merely for my own private use, to employ some leisure hours in transcribing and arranging them under different heads of the Pædobaptist controversy.

"When I had made a considerable progress in the work of transcription and arrangement, MR. HENRY'S *Treatise on Baptism* fell into my hands. Prepossessed of a high regard for the character of that worthy author, I perused the treatise with care. Not convinced, however, by any thing contained in it, that the sprinkling of infants is an appointment of Christ; and being fully persuaded that Mr. Henry had employed his learning and zeal in defence of an unscriptural ceremony; I determined to prosecute the subject with greater application, and to publish the result of my inquiries and thoughts concerning it. Such was the occasion of this publication."

Mr. Booth's plan of treating the subject, if not perfectly original, was in a great degree so. He meets his opponents upon their own ground, avails himself of their own weapons, and with the utmost knowledge and dexterity, turns them against themselves. To adopt the language of one of his Reviewers, "He sets them together by the ears, and leaves them to overthrow the very cause, in defence of which they professed to take the field." This is, by far, the most elaborate of all his publications; in it he has displayed an immense fund of knowledge and reading, and it will remain, for ages to come, a monument, not only of his industry and application, but of extensive learning and profound disquisition. In short, it has established his reputation upon an indisputable basis, as one of the first scholars, and most acute reasoners of the age; at the same time that it has placed the subject of baptism in such a state, as leaves little more to be said upon it by any succeeding controversialist. We shall, therefore, lay before the reader, the contents of the work, adding a few extracts from the close of it, by which he will be enabled to form some faint idea of its importance and magnitude.

" Chap. I. Concerning the nature, obligations, and importance of positive institutions in religion. II. The sig-

nification of the terms *baptise* and *baptism*. III. The design of baptism, or the facts and blessings represented by it, both in regard to our Lord and his disciples. IV. The practice of John the Baptist, of the Apostles, and of the church in succeeding ages, in regard to the manner of administering the ordinance of baptism. V. The present practice of the Greek and Oriental churches in regard to the mode of administration. VI. The design of baptism more fully expressed by immersion than by pouring or sprinkling. VII. Concerning the reasons, rise, and progress of pouring or sprinkling, instead of immersion. VIII. No express precept or precedent in the New Testament for Pædobaptism. IX. No evidence for Pædobaptism before the latter end of the second or the beginning of the third century. X. The high opinion of the Fathers concerning the utility of baptism, and the grounds on which they proceeded in administering that ordinance to infants, when Pædobaptism became a prevailing practice. XI. The modern grounds of Pædobaptism, namely Jewish proselyte baptism.—External covenant's relation,—Jewish circumcision,—particular passages of Scripture, and apostolic tradition, examined. XII. Concerning infant baptism and infant communion, as introduced about the same time, and supported by similar arguments.”

The whole concludes with general remarks to illustrate and confirm the main argument.

The following extract may suffice to give the reader some general idea of the reasoning, and Mr. Booth's method of conducting it.

“ It is very observable, that so many Pædobaptists

themselves, have admitted the facts on which we reason; and that they have either expressly rejected the texts usually pleaded against us, or so explained them, as renders their application in support of infant baptism quite impertinent. *They have admitted the facts on which we reason.* Do we maintain, for instance, that baptism is a positive institution, and that positive rites depend entirely on the revealed will of God, in regard to the manner of performing them, the persons to whom they belong, and the signification of them? All this they readily grant. Do we insist that the term baptism, properly signifies immersion? They expressly allow it. Do we assert that the principal thing intended by the ordinance is a representation of our communion with Christ, in his death, burial, and resurrection? It is cheerfully granted. Do we maintain, that immersion was the apostolic practice, and that, except in extraordinary cases, it was the general custom for thirteen hundred years? They confirm our sentiment. Do we occasionally observe, that immersion is the present practice of the Greek and Oriental churches, and that those churches include about one half of the Christian world? Their own pen bears testimony for us. Do we insist that plunging is more expressive of the great things intended by the ordinance, than pouring or sprinkling? They accede to our opinion. Do we assert, that the first instance of pouring or sprinkling, instead of immersion, which is expressly recorded, was about the middle of the third century, and then condemned; that the apostate church of Rome, all sovereign as her claims are, introduced pouring to common practice; and that the Protestant churches received it from her polluted hands?

These being stubborn facts, are all acknowledged. Do we maintain that, in ordinary cases, immersion is not prejudicial to health? Pædobaptist physicians, without a fee and medical practice, without hesitation, confirm our opinion. Do we assert, that no power on earth has authority to alter the law of Christ, or to depart from apostolic example, in regard to immersion? So do they, in effect, when disputing with Papists concerning the sacred supper. Do we contend that there is no express command, nor plain example, in the New Testament, relating to infant baptism? It is granted by them. Do we plead that there is no evidence of Pædobaptism being practised before the conclusion of the second, or beginning of the third century? This also is readily granted, even by some of those who were the greatest adepts in Christian antiquities. Is it our opinion, that the extravagant notions of the fathers, in the second, and beginning of the third century, concerning the great utility of baptism, and their misunderstanding of John iii. 5, laid the foundation of Pædobaptism? It is allowed. Do we consider the arguments from proselyte baptism, an external covenant, and circumcision, as of no avail to the cause of infant baptism? They concur in our opinion. Do we treat with contempt the plea of pretended apostolic tradition, unsupported by scripture? So do all Protestants, except pædobaptism, episcopacy, or something similar, solicit their patronage. Once more: do we maintain that infant baptism and infant communion were introduced about the same time; that they are supported by kindred arguments; that they were equally common for a course of ages; and that they are still united in the practice of half the Christian

world? We have the happiness to find, that these facts are confirmed by their learned pens.

“ Again: In regard to passages of scripture, usually pleaded against us, we have the pleasure to see that various eminent Pædobaptists either expressly reject them, as having nothing to do in the controversy, or so interpret them, as renders their application to infant baptism quite impertinent. Do we, for example, consider Mat. xxviii. 19, as requiring instruction previous to baptism? So do they.— Do we maintain that Gen. xvii. 7, speaks of a two-fold seed, carnal and spiritual? They freely allow it. Do we understand Ezek. xvi. 20, 21, as regarding the Israelites on the foundation of the Sinai covenant? They acquiesce. Do we assert, that Mat. xix. 14, is no proof of infant baptism? They coincide with us. Do we insist upon it that our Lord, in John iii. 5, is not speaking about the necessity of baptism? So do they. Do we assert, that Acts ii. 39, is impertinently cited in proof of infant baptism? They confirm our assertion. Do we consider the baptizing of households as equally unavailing, when produced against us? So do they. Do we interpret the words of Paul, Rom. xi. 16, as foreign to the cause of pædobaptism? They agree with us. And, finally, do we explain 1 Cor. vii. 14, as relating to lawful marriage and a legitimate offspring? Even here we are not entirely deserted by them, but some of them afford us their friendly suffrage. In a word, there is not, that I recollect, one topic of argument, nor one text of scripture, usually pleaded in favour of infant baptism, by the more judicious of our opponents; but it is either expressly cashiered, as having nothing to do with the

controversy, or so understood, as to be of no service to the cause. We have the honour, therefore, to agree with many of them as to a great part of our premises; and with some of them respecting the whole. Yes, amazing as it may seem, we are honoured with having some of them for our associates in almost every thing except the conclusion. Here, indeed, we are utterly deserted by them. Nor can it be otherwise, while they are Pædo, and we Antipædo, Baptists. However, whether our conclusion or theirs be right, it is manifest that, notwithstanding the number of evidences usually subpœnaed against us, when the validity of infant sprinkling is to be publicly tried; and notwithstanding the formidable appearance they frequently make in the eye of a superficial observer, yet, when those very evidences are impartially examined by Pædobaptists in private, without being perplexed with captious queries, they have not a word to say for infant sprinkling; but all their depositions are directed to prove doctrines and facts of a quite different nature.

“ Further, If you ask Pædobaptists *whose* infants are to be baptised, on *what ground*, and for *what purposes?* they will be found extremely divided. Do you inquire *whose* infants are entitled to baptism? many of them will answer, ‘Those of *believers*.’ This, however, is rejected by multitudes, as a narrow notion, and an uncharitable restriction. It is cashiered, as placing the children of nominal Christians in a worse predicament than that of the infants of ungodly Jews, under the former dispensation, in regard to circumcision. Do you inquire what is the principal ground of pædobaptism? Cyprian, its great patron, and others in

former times, considered a supposed *universality* of Divine Grace, and the *necessity* of baptism, as the main foundation on which they proceeded; Austin, and others, the faith of the *church*; our English establishment, a profession of faith by the sponsors. Dr. Hammond rejects the ancient rite of circumcision, on which many lay a considerable stress, and seems to view the Jewish *proselyte bathing* as the best ground of infant baptism; while Sir Norton Knatchbull reprobates the proselyte plunging, and recurs to *circumcision* as a proper support for Paedobaptism. Dr. Priestley says, ‘I consider the baptising of my children, not as directly implying that they have *any interest in it, or in the things signified by it*, but as a part of my own profession of Christianity.’ Mr. Baxter makes the *faith of the parent* the condition of the children’s church-membership, and of their salvation. Mr. Henry considers a *profession of faith* made by the parent as the ground of an infant’s title to baptism. Others directly oppose this, particularly Mr. Perkins and Archbishop Leighton. Witsius, Vitringa, Venema, and others, consider the children of believers as in a *relative* state of grace; and so make that the main foundation of paedobaptism; while Bishop Prideaux maintains that infants are to be baptised, because ‘they have the faith of the *covenant*, though not the faith of *covenantees*.’

“Do you ask for what *purposes* infants are to be baptised? The Church of England will tell you, that by baptism they are made *members* of Christ, *children* of God, and *inheritors* of the kingdom of heaven. Others deny this, and maintain that the children of believers are to be

considered as interested in those high and heavenly blessings prior to their baptism. The Roman Catholics make it *necessary* to salvation; the Church of England makes it *generally* necessary to final happiness; with which establishment the Lutherans agree: of which opinion was the late Mr. G. Whitfield; and so is Mr. J. Wesley. Multitudes of Pædobaptists, however, deny this regenerating energy and high necessity of infant baptism, though they consider many and great benefits as connected with it. Many of them assert its necessity to initiate them *into the church*; but others insist upon it, that the offspring of believers are entitled to baptism, because they *are* members of the church. So greatly are they divided among themselves! What now can be the reason of this astonishing difference among the Pædobaptists, concerning their common cause? Pardon me, reader, if I should answer, Because they all differ, in that affair, from the word of God. For, as Dr. Beattie observes, “They who allow themselves to contradict matter of fact, either in conversation or in writing, will find it no easy matter to avoid contradicting *themselves*,” and it will be morally impossible for them to avoid contradicting *one another*. The scripture being profoundly silent about infant baptism, they are obliged to argue in its defence from *general* principles, and *moral* considerations; from notions of *expediency*, *fitness*, and *utility*, to the administration of a positive appointment. Thus uniting in one common mistake, they depart from the true nature of the subject about which they inquire: for that subject is a *positive* rite; the *whole being* of which, and all its legitimate connections, depend on the sovereign

pleasure of God. Now though *moral* duty may be fairly argued from general principles and moral considerations, that lie at a great distance from the particular case which is to be proved ; and though the same *natural* duty, may be inferred from a thousand texts of scripture, where that particular duty is not mentioned, and of which the inspired writers had no thought when penning those texts ; yet the case is widely different when a *ritual* duty is the subject of discussion : for then we have nothing at all to guide our inquiries besides *positive law*, and the *example* of inspired men, relating to the matter of investigation. To such precepts and precedents, therefore, we must adhere, or perpetually wander in a maze of uncertainty, and be continually differing one from another.”

The reader will observe that all these particulars are discussed distinctly, and at large, in Mr. Booth's pages ; but, for the sake of brevity, we have omitted, in the foregoing extracts, the references which he makes to the respective chapters of the work in which the various subjects are handled. —The work concludes with the following remarks, which are here quoted as a specimen of that fund of pleasantry and good humour, which pervade all Mr. Booth's controversial writings:—

“ Having examined Pædobaptism according to the plan at first proposed, a remarkable declaration of Bishop Taylor's occurs to remembrance. The declaration to which I refer, was made by him when taking a retrospect of the arguments usually produced on both sides of this dispute,

and is as follows:—‘I think there is so much to be pretended against that [Pædobaptism] which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth than evidence on our side.’ Reflecting on this language of the learned prelate, I am pleased, I am puzzled, I am discouraged. I am *pleased*, greatly pleased, to hear a person of the bishop’s erudition and penetration acknowledge, that *much*, so much may be said against infant baptism. I am yet more pleased to hear him tacitly confess, that *greatly preponderating* evidence is on our side.—I am *puzzled*, however, extremely puzzled;—for I cannot imagine how the right reverend author, notwithstanding all his learning and all his acumen, discovered truth without evidence. This, it must be confessed, is a wonderful secret; and he would certainly have laid posterity under great obligations, had he but made the *arcanum* public. Mankind might have reaped a harvest of benefits from the discovery of such an invention; because it would have been of admirable use in many a pinching case besides Pædobaptism, to which it is here applied. I am equally nonplused when thinking of truth and evidence taking *opposite sides* of a controverted subject. Having never heard of any quarrel between them, either before or since the flood; I took it for granted that they were leagued in eternal friendship: whereas it now appears, on the word of a Bishop, that they cannot agree about infant baptism. This being the case, I am greatly *discouraged*, in respect of an issue to the present controversy. For as truth and evidence do not depend on the pleasure of man, they are stubborn things; and we may justly presume they will not easily quit their stations, out of complaisance to either side.

While, therefore, each abides by his party, the Baptists, it is likely, will plead preponderating evidence, and firmly insist upon it as a maxim of logical prudence, that our assent should always be proportioned to the degree of evidence.— On the other hand, we need not wonder if Pædobaptists exult in the possession of truth, because it is a precious jewel; and such truth especially as is obtained *without evidence*, must be precious indeed, it being so extremely scarce. Despairing, therefore, of putting an end to any controversy where truth and evidence take different sides, I must here lay down my pen.”

The very favourable reception which this work experienced from the public, made a new edition requisite in a very little time; and, accordingly, in 1787, the second edition of Pædobaptism Examined appeared, enlarged from one to two thick volumes. The author had made but little alteration as to the chapters which formed the basis of the first edition, but the number of quotations were more than doubled in the second edition, and the illustrations and reasonings augmented throughout the whole performance. It was improved also by the addition of a very valuable index, as well as a list of the authors quoted, with suitable references.

It may be easily conceived, that this publication of Mr. Booth's must have spread considerable consternation through all the camp of the Pædo-

baptists, and that they would feel the necessity of preparing something in the shape of a reply. This was furnished in a few months after the second edition, by Dr. Edward Williams, a Pædobaptist minister, then of Oswestry, in Shropshire, but since master of a Seminary for the purpose of training up young men for the Ministry, at Roth-erham, in Yorkshire. Of Dr. Williams, we feel no disposition to speak disrespectfully, nor to disparage his abilities; but we have always been of opinion, that it was peculiarly unfortunate for the cause of Pædobaptism, that its defence should have devolved upon him. His frequent violations of the rules of grammar and syntax, might have been excused in any but a Doctor of Divinity, on the ground that the language in which he wrote was not his mother tongue. But the strange principles upon which he attempted to advocate the cause, and the inconclusive reasoning by which those principles were accompanied, tended to render his publication rather injurious than serviceable to it. We can scarcely conceive two combatants more unequally matched, than Dr. Williams and Mr. Booth; and had the former gentleman, even after his publication, conducted himself with common prudence, he had, without much difficulty, escaped from the unfortunate situation (unfortunate we

mean for his reputation) in which his indiscretion soon involved him. But justice to the cause of truth and to his own character, compelled Mr. Booth to resume the controversy, and the reasons will be best learnt from the Preface to a volume which he published in 1792, entitled “ A DEFENCE OF PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED: OR *Animadversions on Dr. Edward Williams’s Antipædobaptism Examined.*” Thus he speaks.

“ The performance of my opponent having made its appearance, I purchased and perused it with care. But though I plainly perceived, in *Antipædobaptism Examined*, a variety of novel ideas expressed with an air of confidence; yet, not considering the general principles on which my reasoning in *Pædobaptism Examined* proceeds, as being in the least subverted, nor my arguments on those principles as having received even a *plausible* answer, I resolved to make no reply. Such was my unwavering determination for more than two years; and in that determination I should probably have still continued, had it not been for credible intelligence which struck me as very extraordinary.

“ A gentleman in the country, who is professedly of the Baptist persuasion, sent me a letter, in which he informed me of a friendly interview that he had with Mr. (now Dr.) Edward Williams, and of some particulars which passed in conversation, relative to *Antipædobaptism Examined*. Among other things, he mentioned the following: ‘ Mr. Williams said, Mr. Booth confessed that his *Book* was UNANSWERABLE. At this I was much surprised, and im-

mediately asked, Why, then, does not Mr. Booth declare for infant baptism? Mr. Williams replied; *The disadvantages attending an open declaration of sentiments, render it inexpedient and imprudent to do so at all times:—or to that effect.*

“ On reading this, I paused—I was astonished—and said within myself; Of what superlative excellence, in the estimate of its author, must *Antipædobaptism Examined* be possessed! What a compliment he pays to my integrity! If my opponent, when conversing with one whom he knows to be an avowed *Baptist*, cannot restrain the ebullitions of self-congratulation, relative to his performance, nor forbear exclaiming, *Io triumphe!* in what sublime strains of self-complacency, and in what ample manner, must he express himself, when conversing with his *Pædobaptist* brethren! It is time for me to put an absolute negative on his totally unfounded assertion; to chastise his unparalleled vanity; and to vindicate my integrity against his implicit, but odious charge!

“ A repeated perusal of *Antipædobaptism Examined*, far from producing that strong conviction of which Dr. Williams was pleased to boast, had an effect quite the reverse. For the principles on which he endeavours to support infant sprinkling, are many of them so novel, so paradoxical, and so extremely foreign from every idea suggested by the law and practice of baptism, as recorded in the New Testament; that I received additional confirmation of my avowed sentiments. Nay, so far from being convinced, in the manner he fondly believed and rashly asserted, I could not forbear suspecting that even many Pædobaptists themselves, among the Dissenters, and especially among our *Congre-*

gational Brethren, must be ashamed to see their cause defended on such principles, and to find such effects attributed to baptism, as various of those are with which they meet in Antipædobaptism Examined."

This defence, which comprises a volume of 513 closely printed pages, must have been, like his former publication, an Herculean labour! It abounds with quotations from English, Latin, and Greek authors, whose opinions are brought to bear upon the subject under discussion. In none of his writings, has the author evinced more exuberance of fancy, greater fertility of imagination, or stronger powers of reasoning, than in his reply to Dr. Williams. While his candour, as a disputant, is everywhere conspicuous, he has interspersed, throughout the work, such happy strokes of pleasantry, as renders a subject, which in the hands of most writers would have been intolerably dry and fatiguing, in a very high degree entertaining and instructive. We cannot afford room to enter into any analysis of the contents of the volume, and the reader must rest satisfied with the following quotation from the close of it:

" I shall now conclude my animadversions on *Antipædobaptism Examined*, by giving a summary of those *peculiarities* which are contained in it, and comprehend the *principal grounds* of Dr. W.'s argumentation. On the following particulars, I therefore desire my reader to fix his

attention. In doing which he may perhaps be able to judge, whether many of them be not, in this controversy, *absolute novelties*; and whether the use of such *data*, in defence of infant sprinkling, be not a strong presumption, that either the cause itself is bad, or that it is handled injudiciously.

“ Dr. W. maintains, then, that baptism is not a merely positive institute; but partly positive, and partly moral—That none of the Mosaic rites were entirely positive—That, in certain cases, local customs and national decency may be permitted to influence the administration of a divine, positive institute—That a wise and righteous legislator does not always intend to have his laws completely understood and obeyed—That the baptismal statute is not determinate and plain, either as to mode or subject—That the baptism of John was one of those ancient Jewish washings, which are mentioned by Paul to the Hebrews; a national purification; and the repentance required, not a personal, but a national confession of sin—That Jesus Christ was equally liable to ceremonial pollution with the Jews in common; and that, when baptized, he was legally purified—That Christian baptism is a ceremonial purification—That it washes away the filth of the flesh—That it is not a duty, but a benefit—That whatever privileges belonged to the former Dispensation, flow on to the present, if not *expressly* repealed—That, not the law of baptism, but the gospel revelation, is the rule of baptizing—That the administration of baptism is a discretionary trust, and at the option of a minister, equally as the subjects of his public discourses—That the mode of administration may be varied according

to circumstances, and referred to the private judgment of the person or persons concerned—That a revelation of divine mercy is an external covenant to man—That many degrees of relative holiness now exist; and that Jews, Mahometans, and Hottentots, partake of the first degree—That there are degrees of church-membership, relative to infants, even though they be not admitted to the Lord's table—That the qualifications of infants for baptism, as well as adults, are entirely moral; being no other than those which God, as the moral governor and judge of the world, requires of all mankind, indiscriminately, considered as immortal and accountable creatures—That there is no difference between the members of the Christian church, and that of the ancient Israelites—That the Jews, having forfeited their national adoption, the Gentiles in general have succeeded to it—That Christian kingdoms are the Lord's, in a sense perfectly similar to that in which the kingdom of Israel was his—That unregenerate persons are warranted to call *Jehovah their God*, and themselves *his people*—That the national form of the Jewish church is transferred to that of the New Economy—That the kingdom of Christ, though *not of this world*, comprehends whole nations *as such*—That National churches might be so constituted as to suit the Congregational plan of ecclesiastical government—That the Christian church consists, in a great measure, of infants and children—That, in a Christian country, it is incumbent on every unbaptised profligate and infidel to be baptised—That if the scripture be not decisively express against infant baptism, we are to conclude the Apostles practised it—That infants have a legal right to the Lord's

supper; and that infant communion is merely an impropriety, prudential reasons lying against it—That the Jews owed their Bible to circumcision—That baptism ratifies the promises, and authenticates Divine Revelation—That baptism gives a legal title to read the scripture, to all the contents of that sacred volume, and to all the means of conversion—That the obligation to repentance, to holiness, and to obedience, results from being baptised—That those who were baptised in their infancy, have a stronger and more indubitable title to numerous blessings, than those that were baptised on a personal profession of faith—And, finally, *That if a person, as baptised, be not privileged with having JEHOVAH FOR HIS GOD, it may be justly questioned WHETHER THE SUN EVER YET SHONE UPON BRITAIN.*

“As Dr. W. began by announcing his decided opinion, and by indicating its vast importance; so I conclude with recounting his new discoveries, and with showing his superlative confidence.” *

* It may be expected that some notice should here be taken of a pamphlet which was published against “Pædobaptism Examined,” under the title of “Candid Reasons for renouncing the principles of Antipædobaptism: by Peter Edwards:” and the rather as Mr. Booth declined publicly entering the lists with that writer. Mr E. was originally a Pædobaptist, but renounced his principles as such, and became, for several years, the Pastor of a Baptist church. In process of time, however, he reverted to his former opinion on the subject, and published what he calls “Candid Reasons” for his conduct. The Baptists, as is well known, contend that there is

Having thus given some account of Mr. Booth's different labours in defence of the ordinance of believer's baptism, which, as relating to one subject, we have connected together, we now return to notice his "ESSAY ON THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST," the first edition of which appeared in 1788. In the early part of the last century, Mr. John Glas, minister of the parish of Tealing, se-

neither precept nor example, in the New Testament, for baptising infants—one of which, they insist, is necessary to warrant the administration of that ordinance. Mr. Edwards takes up this argument, and labours to show, that the Baptists act inconsistently with their own principles in admitting females to the Lord's supper, for which, he contends, there is neither the one nor the other. In prosecuting his attack, had he conducted himself with the temper of a Christian, and the manners of a gentleman, there can be no doubt but that Mr. Booth would have endeavoured to show him, that "the principles of Antipædobaptism and the practice of female communion, were completely consistent." But when, instead of confining himself to that temperate and sober discussion which alone deserves the name of religious controversy, he descends to scurrilous and abusive language, fit only for a heroine of Billingsgate, he at once absolved Mr. Booth from every obligation to dispute with him. He was not insensible of what was due to his own character, and he might recollect the maxim of Dr. Young, that "every author lives or dies by his own pen." Besides, he might think himself warranted to hope that he who had changed and rechanged, might, like the ca-

parated from the church of Scotland, and published his reasons in an excellent treatise entitled “ *The Testimony of the King of Martyrs,*” &c. a most judicious and scriptural illustration of Christ’s good confession, which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, concerning his kingdom, as distinguished from the Jewish theocracy, the kingdoms of this world, and the false churches that now bear that name. Mr. Glas’s book is well known,

melion, change again! The “Candid Reasons,” however, were answered by several of Mr. Booth’s friends, and particularly in a pamphlet given to the world by his friend Mr. DORE, entitled “The Principles of Antipædobaptism, and the practice of female communion completely consistent,” with a preface and notes by the editor; printed for Button, 1795, price 1s. 6d. By whom this tract was written, the intelligent reader, who has perused, with attention, the volumes of “Pædobaptism Examined,” will find little difficulty in deciding. It may not be amiss, also, to mention a paper inserted in the “Theological Repository,” New Series, volume 2, page 132, entitled “Strictures on Mr. Peter Edwards’ Candid Reasons,” &c. in which the argument is handled with great perspicuity and critical skill, and the subject placed in the clearest and most satisfactory light. The writer of it, Dr. James Watt, a Physician in Glasgow, was, when an Antiburgher minister, convinced of the divine institution of believer’s baptism, by reading Mr. Booth’s Pædobaptism Examined; and having resigned his connection with that body, became one of the elders of the Baptist church in Glasgow.

and has been much circulated in Scotland, where, we have no doubt, it has been the means of leading very many into just views of this important subject; but, in this country, the work has never obtained much notice, owing, probably, to the disadvantages of its style, which is diffuse, involved, and careless. Dr. Owen, to whom, no doubt, Mr. Glas himself was much indebted, had published several things connected with this subject more than a century ago, but his writings are but ill adapted to the generality of readers in the present day, being, in general, too elaborate and learned. It might, therefore, justly excite one's surprise, that, previous to the appearance of Mr. Booth's Essay, there was nothing to be found, among the English Dissenters, that was immediately *ad rem*. Bishop Hoadley, it is well known, had alarmed all the clergy of the establishment by a sermon preached before his Majesty king GEORGE the I. on the 31st of March, 1717, upon the subject of Christ's confession before Pontius Pilate, *My kingdom is not of this world*; but this has been considered, by many, merely as a political manœuvre, intended, by its author, to check the insolence of the Tory party, which, at that time was gaining a powerful ascendancy in the state. What else, indeed, can we suppose a lord

Bishop to have meant by proclaiming “ that the kingdom of Christ, and the sanctions by which it is supported, were of a nature wholly intellectual and spiritual—that the church, taking the term in its utmost latitude of signification, did not, and could not, possess the slightest degree of authority under any commission, or pretended commission, from him—and that the church of England, and all other national churches, were merely civil or human institutions, established for the purpose of diffusing and perpetuating the knowledge of Christianity?” &c.* What was this but to sap

* The divine right of Episcopacy or of Presbyterianism, or indeed of any other form of religious worship, to an exclusive toleration by the civil magistrate, are matters rarely insisted on by their respective advocates in the present day. The gradual progress of religious knowledge, and the striking evidence of facts, have combined to banish from among us those high and intolerant claims, which a century and a half ago, were the source of so much rancour and animosity among the professors of Christianity. The friend of toleration and of peace, cannot but be gratified at finding, even amongst the dignitaries of the national church, the sober language of truth, of mercy, and of conciliation, so strikingly gaining ground. The concessions of the venerable Watson, Bishop of Landaff, and of the liberal and enlightened Paley, are well known; let

the very foundation upon which the whole fabric

us join to their suffrages in favour of toleration, the testimony of the amiable biographer of the immortal Milton.

“To the politician,” says Dr. Symmons, “who contemplates, in this country, the advantages of a church-establishment, and sees it in union with the most perfect toleration—the plan recommended [by Milton, of abolishing tithes, and of allowing every pastor to be supported by his own immediate flock] would appear to be visionary or pernicious; and we should not hesitate to condemn it, if its practicability and inoffensive consequences were not incontrovertibly established by the testimony of America. From Hudson’s Bay, with the small interruption of Canada, to the Mississippi, this immense continent beholds the religion of Jesus, unconnected with the patronage of Government, subsisting in independent yet friendly communities, breathing that universal charity which constitutes its vital spirit, and offering, with its distinct yet blending tones, one grand combination of harmony to the ear of its *Heavenly Father*.”

In the above extract, the intelligent reader will discover the language of truth; we appeal to him whether the following passage, from the same learned pen, do not display an equal portion of candour:

“I am strongly attached to the Church of England, from whose lap I sprang, and at whose bosom I have been fostered: but my attachment to her is not that of instinct but of reason. I love her, not merely because she is my mother and my nurse, but because she is deserving of my love.—I give her my most ardent affection, when I contemplate her as mild and liberal, as uniting order with toleration, as the patroness of learning,

of episcopacy is reared. So indeed it was under

and the encourager of inquiry, as the determined enemy of persecution for opinions, whether it be avowed by the stern republic of a presbytery, or by the unfeeling policy of a pontifical conclave. Such is the ground on which I rest my affection to my native church: but if I saw her actuated by a narrow and ferocious spirit, guarding her own temporal honours with more jealousy than the vital principles of Christ's religion; doing evil with the flagitious pretence that good may be the result; mounted on a sanguinary tribunal, to suppress opinion with overwhelming punishment; and hearing with delight the groan that issued from a bosom hostile to herself—if I saw her in this sad state of desertion from her own character, and of apostacy from the religion of her Master, I should no longer recognise her as the object of my filial reverence; I would renounce her with indignation; and, throwing her disgraceful favours at her feet, I would retire, beyond her corruption and her power, to some uncivilized region, where I might vindicate the name of Jesus from its impious profanation, and show him to be the author of blessings and not of misery to man."

For laying before the reader these truly liberal and Christian sentiments, clothed in such classical purity of style, it is hoped no apology will be required; nor can we take leave of this most elegant and interesting piece of biography,—a work, of which it is difficult to say whether it reflects more honour on the poet or upon his historian,—without enriching the pages of this pamphlet with his strictures on the character of that relentless and cruel bigot, Archbishop Laud.

stood by the watchmen of the holy city, who set

“ The church of England, at this unfortunate crisis, could boast, among her prelates, of a Williams, a Davenant, a Hall, and an Usher;—men illustrious for their talents, eminent by their learning, amiable for their virtues, and venerable for their piety; but, unhappily, at their head was placed a prelate, whose views were narrow, whose superstition was abject and intolerant, and who was pleased to be the supporter of that despotism which supported his own. Much as I dislike the principles and the temper of the unfortunate Laud, I would willingly believe that the conduct which produced such ruinous consequences to his cause, and to the whole community, was the offspring of good motives; and that he intended well as a Christian, though he acted perniciously as a politician. His bigotted observance of ceremonies might be considered, in those times, as an inoffensive display of littleness. His support of an arbitrary court is as easily to be pardoned, by the liberal and comprehensive mind, which can allow for the effects of education, or for the natural, and, of course, venial corruption of office, in its influence on the understanding and the heart. But when I see him confounding the cause of Christ with that of the prelate; when I observe him persecuting, with merciless rigour, men of exemplary lives, united with him in every point of Christian faith, and whose sole crime was a conscientious opposition to the hierarchal dignity, and a regard to what they deemed to be the simplicity of the gospel; when I contemplate him on the judgment seat, uncovering his head, and thanking God on the passing of a cruel sentence, which he had himself dictated; when I see him afterwards, in his closet, recording, with calm rancour and cold-blooded exultation, the execution of these

themselves by hundreds, in battle array, to protect the craft by which their wealth was gained, and to repel the assailing hand of the rude bishop. The latter, indeed, was soon aware that he had carried this doctrine a little too far, and therefore proceeded to *guard the subject on the other side*, by proper explanations, and prudently to measure back his steps. Mr. Booth's Essay was directed to the same object as Bishop Hoadley's sermon; and to engage the reader's attention to it, he begins his preface by remarking, that

“ The Kingdom of Christ is a subject of great importance: for, according to the views we have of that Kingdom, will our conclusions be, respecting various branches

judicial barbarities; when I behold him insulting the age of the mild and liberal Abbott, and spurning him from his throne, to obtain premature possession of the Metropolitan power; when I remark him ruining, with vengeance as ungrateful as it was unrelenting, the first patron of his fortunes, bishop Williams, whose hand had placed the mitre on his head—my charity must necessarily falter, and I cannot immediately decide that he stands accountable for nothing more than erroneous judgment. He wished, indeed, for the prosperity of the church; but only as it was blended with the splendour of the hierarchy; and he laboured for its aggrandisement, as Philip laboured for that of Macedon, or Frederic for that of Prussia, that it might form the broader and more elevated pedestal to his own individual greatness.”

Dr. SYMMONS' *Life of Milton*, p. 172, &c.

of religious conduct. If those views be imaginary, these conclusions must be false. By the former, the glory of Messiah's regal character will be obscured: by the latter, his worship will be corrupted: whereas the true doctrine concerning this holy empire, may not only be the mean of preserving from those evils, but of presenting us with *data* for the decision of many disputes among the professors of Christianity. A competent acquaintance, therefore, with its nature and laws, its emoluments and honours, is closely connected with our duty and our happiness; which acquaintance must be derived from divine Revelation.

“ Important, however, as the subject manifestly is, it has been but seldom professedly discussed. This consideration was a leading motive to the present attempt. To illustrate the nature of our Lord's Kingdom, and to infer the conclusions flowing from it, constitute the design of this Essay.

“ The Author has expressed his thoughts with great freedom; yet, without intending the least offence to any party of Christians, or to any person, from whose notions and practices he conscientiously differs. In the course of discussion, he animadverts, indeed, on some particulars, with a degree of severity: but then they appear to him in the light of *political artifices*, which either impeach the dominion of Christ in his own kingdom, or degrade and corrupt that worship which he requires. Now, in cases of this kind, the writer is of opinion, that allegiance to the King Messiah, and true benevolence to man, demand the language of marked opposition.”

Small as this publication is, we think it extremely valuable, though by no means so rich in

doctrine as Mr. Glas's Testimony of the King of Martyrs. It draws a striking contrast between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdoms of this world, in the latter of which, all national establishments of religion are included:

“The church of England,” says he, “is manifestly a secular kingdom. For it is established by human laws, and acknowledges a political head; nor is it esteemed material whether that head be male or female. It is a creature of the state, supported by the state, incorporated with the state, and governed by a code of laws confirmed by the state—a code, very different from the sacred canons of the New Testament; those being quite foreign to its constitution. Its principal officers are appointed by the crown; and, in virtue of ecclesiastical station, are lords of Parliament. Nay, even the doctrines professed, and the worship performed, in that establishment, are all secularized. Its creeds and forms of prayer, its numerous rubrics, and various rites, are adopted and used under the sanction of civil authority. Its Liturgy, therefore, may be justly considered as an *Act of Parliament* respecting religious affairs. It must, therefore, be considered as a kingdom ‘of this world.’”

Nor does the author stop here; he animadverts, in the most pointed language, upon various corruptions which but too much prevail among dissenting churches of the present day, not sparing even those of his own connection.

“Some, of different communions,” says he, “have deliberately acted as if the preacher’s work were a mere trial of skill, and as if a pulpit were the stage of a harlequin. To display the fertility of their invention, they have selected for texts mere scraps of scripture language; which, so far from containing complete propositions, have not, in their dislocated state, conveyed a single idea. Upon those they have harangued; while the ignorant multitude have been greatly surprised that the preacher could find so much, where common capacities perceived nothing. Sometimes these men of genius will choose passages of scripture expressive of plain historical facts, which have no connection with the great work of salvation by Jesus Christ; and handle them (not professedly by way of accommodation, for then it might occasionally be admitted) but as if they were *sacred allegories*. Such historical facts being *spiritualized*, as they love to call it, doctrines, privileges, duties, in abundance, are easily derived from them. Nay, so ingenious are preachers of this turn, that it is no hard matter for them to find a great part of their creed in almost any text they take. Thus they allegorize common sense into pious absurdity—It might, perhaps, be too barefaced, though it would certainly suit the vanity of such preachers, were they frequently to address their hearers on the pronominal monosyllable *I*: and there are two passages of sacred writ where it occurs in the most apposite manner. The former would make an admirable text; the latter, a noble conclusion: and they are as follow: ‘Such a man as *I*—Is not this great Babylon that *I* have built?’

“Others, and often the same persons, frequently use the

gestures of the theatre, and the language of a mountebank: as if their business were to amuse, to entertain, and to make their hearers laugh. Extravagant attitudes and quaint expressions, idle stories, and similies quite ludicrous, appear in abundance, and constitute no small part of the entertainment furnished by such persons. But in what a state must the consciences of those preachers be, who can deliberately and with premeditation act in this manner! Or, what must we think of their petitions for divine assistance, in addressing the people, when they intend thus to treat them! —I called it *entertainment*; and, surely, they themselves do not consider it in a religious point of light. For can any man, who is not insane, deliberately adopt measures of this kind, when really aiming, either to produce, or to promote, a devotional and heavenly temper in the hearts of his hearers? Yet that is the general end of preaching. Or can the preacher have any devotion, while showing the airs of a mountebank? and when, if the bulk of his auditory had no more decency than himself, there would be a burst of laughter throughout the assembly? Whatever such declaimers may think, where there is no solemnity, there is no devotion: and we may venture to add, that a person habitually destitute of devotion in his own heart, while pretending to teach others the doctrine of Christ, is a wretched character in the sight of God, and has reason to tremble. Such a man serves not our Lord Jesus Christ, but, in some form or other, his own interests. He may wish for popularity, and perhaps may obtain it from the ignorant multitude; but people of sense and of piety will consider him as disgracing his office, as affronting their

understandings, and as insulting the majesty of that Divine Presence in which he stands. For where or when upon earth are we to expect solemnity, if not in a worshipping assembly, and in him that leads the public devotion? In such a situation, a man should be solemn as death."

These remarks cannot be too generally enforced among preachers of every denomination, whether Baptist or Pædobaptist, Conformist or Dissenter. The piece was considerably improved by Mr. Booth in a second edition; and we have no doubt will long continue to rise in estimation among the friends of primitive Christianity.

The next publication which occupied the pen of Mr. Booth was his "GLAD TIDINGS TO PERISHING SINNERS," the object of which is to prove that "*The Genuine Gospel contains a complete warrant for the UNGODLY to believe in Jesus Christ,*" the first edition of which appeared in 1796. The design of this work is not very dissimilar to that of the Reign of Grace; but the author had powerful inducements for resuming the subject, which it may not prove uninteresting to glance at.

About this time there evidently appeared, among some leading ministers of the Calvinistical persuasion, a growing partiality for the sentiments and writings of the American divines, particularly

those of Bellamy and Hopkins of New England. These authors, although many good things are to be found in their writings, have certainly verged into a dangerous extreme on other points, in their opposition to Arminian and Antinomian speculations. Mr. Hopkins contends that regeneration consists *wholly* in a *change of the will, or heart*, and not in the intellect or faculty of the understanding, and that, in this operation, the Spirit is the only agent; that the word of God is not, *in any degree*, a mean by which this change is effected! Men, according to his theory, are first regenerated in order to introduce light into the mind; consequently, that they are not regenerated *by light*, or “the truths of God’s word.” He further maintains, that a person must not only be convinced of his guilt, and the just condemnation due to it, but he must have the true knowledge of God, and a new, a humble, and a contrite heart, to hate sin as such, and to love God and delight in his law;—and all this, not only *previous* to his justification, and *in order to it*, but even previous to his knowledge of the Mediator, and of faith in him; while he scruples not to affirm, that those who have never been reconciled to God and his holy law in any other way, but by first seeing and believing in the grace of God through

Christ, are yet *ignorant* of the true grace of God, and *enemies* to it. Such are the sentiments which were gaining ground among the dissenters in England, when Mr. Booth published his “GLAD TIDINGS.”*

* Much as the writer of this Essay approves of the design and general execution of this treatise, a regard to truth obliges him to confess that there are a few things pertaining to it, which he could have wished otherwise. I. He dislikes the term “warrant” in the title-page, because, in his opinion, it militates against the free grace of the gospel. A warrant, strictly speaking, implies an authority or right to do any thing. Now the gospel certainly does authorise or empower any one who hears the gospel to believe it; but this is saying very little indeed of its free and inviting aspect to the guilty. It *commands*, *entreats*, and *beseeches* every one who hears it, in the most earnest manner, to believe unto the saving of the soul, at the same time that it threatens and denounces condemnation on every soul of man that rejects it. II. The author’s view of justifying faith, although it may comport with the use of the term “warrant,” is not supported by the tenor of the New Testament. “By believing in Jesus Christ,” says he, page 3, “is intended *receiving him*, as exhibited in the doctrine of divine grace; or *depending upon him only*, as revealed in the gospel, for pardon, peace, and life eternal.” But these things are the effects of faith, and not faith itself; and it may be added, that not one of the texts to which Mr. B. refers, prove that faith is any thing more than *belief*, or the *crediting of a report* founded on testimony. The limits of a note will not allow a full discussion of this subject—let the

That a man who had the honour of the gospel,

reader impartially consult a Sermon, by Mr. M'Lean, of Edinburgh, entitled "*The Belief of the Gospel saving Faith.*" See his Works, vol. 4, Dis. I. III. Mr. Booth's method of exculpating himself from the assumption of having a leaning towards the Sandemanian heresy, has always appeared to this writer uncandid. Mr. S. is indirectly accused of "gross misrepresentation, illiberal censure, and of sarcastical contempt," p. 7. Were we disposed to enter upon a vindication of the character of that writer, we might surely be allowed to ask for proof of the justice of those charges, which, we confess, we have never yet seen satisfactorily made out. It has too long been the fashion to rail, where we ought to confute.—But this is not all—Mr. Booth has introduced an extract of a single page from the two volumes of "*Palæmon's Creed reviewed,*" which is certainly not incompatible with the doctrine contained in his "*Glad Tidings,*" though it might probably have been very difficult to have selected as much more from the whole of the volumes that would have suited his purpose;—but how easy would it have been for him to have extracted from the writings of Mr. Glas or Mr. Sandeman, page after page, of the most rich and precious doctrine, most full and express to the subject immediately discussed in his work. This conduct, we are aware, is become fashionable, but to us it appears difficult to reconcile it with Mr. B.'s usual candour and integrity. *Amicus Socrates, Amicus Plato, sed magis Amica Veritas.* The late Dr. Erskine, of Edinburgh, many years ago, set an example of the same conduct in the preface to his "*Theological Dissertations.*" It would puzzle all the critics in the universe to

and the welfare of the churches so much at heart as he uniformly had, should remain passive on this occasion, was not to be expected. The sentiment which animated the great apostle of the Gentiles, on another occasion, fired his bosom; and however respectable the authors by whom such doctrines were propagated, either in America or England, Mr. Booth was ready to say with his illustrious predecessor, *To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* To the confutation of these principles, the work of which we are treating, was immediately directed, and the grand question discussed is, “whether the gospel itself be a complete warrant for the most ungodly person to believe in Jesus, without any holy disposition being necessary for that purpose.” Mr. Booth takes the affirmative side of this question, and supports it with his usual ability; maintaining that the gospel is a message of peace to guilty man, proclaiming redemption to the chief of sinners, through the atonement finished upon

show the slightest difference between the learned doctor's view of “Faith” and Mr. Sandeman's; yet he has discovered the most terrible apprehension of being suspected of Sandemianism!

the cross, and calling upon the most ungodly to believe and be saved. He enters at considerable length, into a refutation of the sentiments of Dr. Hopkins, both as they respect regeneration and justification, which he shows were calculated only to “corrupt the gospel,” and were fraught with a most “pernicious tendency.” A second edition of the work, with considerable additions and improvements, was published in 1800.*

Having briefly noticed Mr. Booth’s larger works, we now return to glance at those minor productions of his pen, which the dictates of humanity, the existing state of the Christian profession, or the love of truth extorted from him.

About the year 1792, the attention of the people of England was excited in no common degree

* To the reader who would see these strange, and we may add, pernicious sentiments satisfactorily confuted, we would earnestly recommend the perusal of a small piece published in 1802, by Mr. Archibald M‘Lean, of Edinburgh, entitled, “A Reply to Mr. Fuller’s Appendix to his book on the Gospel worthy of all Acceptation: particularly to his doctrine of antecedent Holiness, and the nature and object of justifying Faith:” sold by Button, price 1s. 6d. Of this small tract, it is not too much to say, that it is worth many a folio volume of religious controversy. It discusses and confutes some of the most subtle and deceitful glosses which perhaps have ever been propagated in the world on the important article of justifica-

towards the state of our sable and oppressed brethren, on the Continent of Africa, as well as in our West India colonies; and petitions to the legislature and the throne, for the abolition of “the accursed trade in man,” crowded in from every quarter of the kingdom. To suppose Mr. Booth an inactive spectator, or insensible to the progress of this benevolent work, would betray great ignorance of his character. It was a subject in which the interests of humanity were deeply concerned, and he well knew that he who does not feel as a man, could never act as a Christian.—The cries and tears of the oppressed Africans pierced every fibre of his soul—their pitiable case took deep hold of his heart, and became much the subject of his entreaties at the throne of grace, both in public and private. And here we may

tion; and we are clearly of the mind of the late Dr. Erskine, of Edinburgh, than whom a more competent judge could scarcely be found, that “it exhibits one of the most finished pieces of polemical divinity, that is to be found in the English language; and, considered as the production of one who had attained to nearly his 70th year, it deserves to be considered as one of the most extraordinary productions of the age.” We have been the more particular in adverting to this tract, as we do not find it inserted, (for what reasons we know not,) in any of the four volumes of the new edition of the author’s works now publishing.

notice a singularity in the tenor of his public prayers, which is worthy of being recorded. When addressing the throne of Grace in behalf of his pastoral charge, his petitions were generally put up to the Supreme Being in his paternal character, calling him Holy, Heavenly, or Righteous Father; but in his intercessions for his native country, the human race in general, or the poor oppressed Africans in particular, he invoked him, as Isaac and Jacob did of old, in the character of GOD ALMIGHTY.

But his exertions for the accomplishment of this benevolent object, were not confined merely to his prayers. He took an active part in forwarding the petitions to the legislature. A collection was made amongst his own congregation, in aid of the society which was established for effecting the abolition of that infernal traffic, and to excite his hearers to a liberality corresponding to the magnitude of the occasion, he delivered a most judicious and impressive discourse from Exodus xxi. 16, which was afterwards printed at their request, and circulated by the society to a very great extent. Mr. Booth's text upon that occasion, was certainly a very memorable one, and could not fail to strike the attention of the most superficial reader. *He that stealeth a man and sel-*

leth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. When we recollect that the most daring attempts were made by the advocates of the African slave-trade, to justify this most inhuman and barbarous traffic on the grounds of the Jewish law, we shall see a striking propriety in the text made choice of by Mr. Booth on this occasion as the ground of his reasoning. It led him immediately to the consideration of the practices resorted to by the slave dealers and captains of ships, for the purpose of procuring them at first, and denounced the divine vengeance against them. After showing that the law mentioned in the text, though given to the ancient Hebrews as a body politic, proceeds upon a moral ground, and explaining both the grounds and the extent to which slavery was permitted among them, he states, in a clear and striking point of view, the difference that existed between *their* slavery and that of modern Europeans, showing that, supposing God had permitted the Israelitish people to traffic in the human species, and to enslave the Gentiles to a much greater degree than he did, it would not have authorised the conduct of Europeans towards the Africans. As a specimen of the liberal, enlightened, and benevolent sentiments which abound in this excellent sermon, the reader may take the following extracts:—

“ As to that part of the Jewish law, which is, properly and strictly speaking, *moral*, the obligation of which extends to all mankind, in every age; it forbids nothing to an African, that is equitable in the conduct of a European. It knows no more of a *white* man buying and enslaving a *black* one, than it does of the *latter* so treating the *former*. In its impartial estimate, and under its commanding power, Africans and Europeans, Pagans and Christians, are all on a level. Must the right under consideration, then, be inferred from what is called the law of *nature*? But that is the same in Africa as it is in Europe; entirely the same over all the globe. According to this law, be the station of an *innocent* Negro ever so obscure, his poverty ever so great, his manners ever so rude, or his mental capacities ever so contracted, he has an equal claim to personal liberty with any man upon earth. For the rights of humanity, being common to the whole of our species, are the same in every part of the world.

“ It follows, therefore, that if the lawfulness of purchasing innocent persons for the most degrading and cruel slavery exist among men, it must be a common right, and equally possessed by all nations: nor can the exercise of it have any limitation from principles of a *moral* nature. No limits can be here assigned, except those of power, of policy, or of inclination. It would, consequently, be quite as equitable, benevolent, and humane, for the Africans, laden with produce of their own country, annually to visit our English ports, as we do theirs, and for similar purposes. Yes, they might, if it were in their power, with equal justice, and with less dishonour, fit out a hun-

dred and eighty, or two hundred ships, for the port of London, of Bristol, and of Liverpool—ships adapted to the *stowage of MAN*, and furnished with a frightful apparatus to render the confinement of Britons completely miserable, as well as perfectly secure. When this commercial, this *man*-trading fleet arrived, if cargoes of men, women and children were not prepared, the officers belonging to each vessel might practise all their arts, to excite a spirit of covetousness and of cruelty in our governors and fellow-subjects, in order that, by an armed force, the peaceable inhabitants of whole villages might be captured—that, in our courts of justice, innocent persons, for the advantage of their judges, might be convicted—that private individuals might kidnap whomsoever they could, and thought saleable—that, by all these infamous means, the ships might be freighted, at every returning season, with forty thousand Britons—and, finally, that all who survive their miserable confinement while on board, might be taken to the best market for the human species; exposed, in the most indecent manner, to public sale; handled and examined, like so many head of cattle, by their purchasers; consigned over, with their unborn posterity, to the most abject and cruel slavery, from generation to generation; and all for—what? Here let humanity blush, let mercy weep, and let justice be roused into indignation: but let not Britons forget, that this is a picture, in miniature, of their own behaviour toward the Africans!

“ Once more: Were the conduct of our man-merchants lawful, neither the principles of morality, nor those of religion, could lie in the way of their buying, and selling for

slaves, the innocent natives of Holland, or France, or any other neighbouring nation. For as it is impossible to prove that the natural rights of humanity are not equally sacred in Africa, as they are in Europe; so the cruel and bloody hand of rapacity might with equal justice lay hold of the Dutchman, or the Frenchman, as of the swarthy Guineaman. Nor, other things being equal, is there the least reason for us to imagine, that the white skin of a European would afford any more protection against a violent seizure, than does the black skin of an African. No; had the trader in *man* an equal opportunity of gratifying his cruel avarice; were he equally sure of impunity, and no more exposed to infamy, in the one case than in the other; the same disregard to justice, and the same principle of avarice, would have a similar operation on the persons of neighbouring Europeans, as they have on the poor Negroes.—Nay, he who is, by profession, a negro-merchant; whose business it is to buy and sell his fellow-creatures, without regard to their guilt, or their innocence; who has been in that practice for a course of years; who is habituated to it, and hardened in it, so that he carries on his iniquitous commerce, without remorse or shame, in the face of the sun; cannot be considered as restrained by any religious or virtuous principles, though he never attempted to purchase, for West Indian slavery, any of his peaceable neighbours in *this* country. No; would the laws and customs of the land permit, as in former times, he would no more scruple to encourage kidnapping in England than in Africa: and be equally ready to buy a native of his own parish, as he would the inhabitant of a remote continent.—It appears,

therefore, with superior evidence, that the European commerce in man, and the slavery connected with it, are absolutely indefensible on the grounds of the Jewish law."

The Sermon closes with the following pathetic appeal to the hearts of his hearers:

" Having discussed my subject according to the plan proposed, I shall now conclude with a few exhortations relative to our own duty. As being professedly the followers of Christ, and the friends of mankind, I would exhort you, my brethren, *earnestly and frequently to pray for the interposition of Providence to abolish the detestable traffic in man.* That it is our indispensable duty to pray for the enlargement of our Lord's visible kingdom among men, is plain; that the despised Africans are naturally as capable of being made the spiritual subjects of Jesus Christ as ourselves, ought not to be questioned; and that the Slave-trade is, at present, an effectual bar to the propagation of Christianity among them, appears with decisive evidence. Nay, it is an insuperable obstruction to the progress of civilization among them, and to an honourable commerce with them. Zeal for the honour of Christ, and love to our fellow-creatures, ought therefore to inspire us with ardent prayer, that the horrid impediment may be removed, and that Christ may be glorified among them. Nor ought we to pray, merely, that God would abolish the infamous commerce in man, on the shores of Africa; but also for the gradual emancipation of oppressed Negroes in the West India islands: that slavery of innocent persons may cease to exist, and sink under the detestation of all Europe. For

what must the enslaved Africans in those islands think of Christians, of Christianity, and of Christ, under the tuition of their oppressors?

“Again: Let your ardent and frequent prayers be *accompanied with prudent, peaceable, and steady efforts, in order to procure the total abolition of that criminal traffic, and of the cruel slavery consequent upon it.* This is manifestly enjoined by that law of the Lord, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* A divine precept this, which requires us to do to others, as we might reasonably wish them to treat us, where we in their situation, and they in ours.—When reflecting on this branch of moral duty, with reference to the case before us, I have sometimes been struck with the following supposed case. I have imagined myself, my family, and all my dearest social connections, with many thousands of my countrymen, to have been kidnapped, bought, and sold into a state of cruel slavery. I have imagined the inhabitants of my native country in general, to have received authentic information of the iniquitous manner in which we were captured, transported into a foreign land, and there enslaved. I have still further imagined, that extremely few among Britons had any compassion for us; that only here and there one would remember us in their prayers, or exert any endeavours, either to relieve our distresses, or to prevent many thousands of equally innocent persons from falling, year after year, into similar miseries. I have then supposed, that, in such a situation, I should consider Britons as quite insensible to the honour of national character, to the claims of private justice, and to the finer feelings of civilized humanity. Nay, I have imagined, that, when under paroxysms of pain, I should reflect on their

merciless conduct with indignation; consider them as devoted to the gain of oppression; as filling up their measure of national guilt; and as the destined objects of divine vengeance.

“On the other hand, I have supposed all those myriads of Negroes in our West India islands, that are groaning under cruel slavery, to be acquainted with the true God, and with the prayers of thousands in this country, in order to procure a speedy abolition of the horrid traffic in man on the coasts of Africa, and a total, but *gradual* abolition of slavery in our West India islands. I have then thought of the gratitude which must, on such a supposition, abound in the bosoms of those Negroes toward their compassionate friends; of the ten thousand times ten thousand prayers which they must address to the Father of mercies, that success may attend the cause of justice and of humanity in which their friends were sincerely engaged; and of the numerous benedictions which, from their hearts, they must pronounce on the persons, the families, and all the lawful pursuits, of those that were seeking to do them good.

“On my own mind these thoughts have sometimes made a strong impression, and have roused attention to the natural rights of oppressed Africans. For though they are ignorant of the true God, and unacquainted with our concern to promote their happiness; yet they are *men*, and our *brethren* of the human race: agreeably to that saying, *God hath made of one blood all nations of men*.—Few of them, indeed, can either speculate on our conduct respecting a melioration of their state, or pray for us; yet they are no less the proper objects of benevolence, but rather deserve a greater degree of our compassion on that account.

“As it is our design at this time, to make a collection for

promoting the general design of that worthy *Society* which has existed for some years in this metropolis, in order to *effect the abolition of the Slave-trade*, I would earnestly exhort you to make a liberal contribution for their assistance. The members of that benevolent society have done worthily. They deserve the assistance and the thanks of every friend to moral justice, and to humanity. Let us, therefore, endeavour to strengthen their hands, and to promote the righteous cause in which they are united: not doubting but the wisdom, the rectitude, and the benevolence of our British legislature will, ere long, be manifested in totally abolishing the English commerce in man; and in providing for the gradual emancipation of Negro-slaves in our West India islands.”

A practice having existed for many years among the ministers belonging to the Particular Baptist denomination resident in the metropolis, of holding a monthly meeting at each others place of worship, with the view of promoting love and unity; it was agreed, in the year 1800, to give a set of discourses on the different branches of the Lord’s prayer. Dr. Jenkins took the lead with a sermon on the words “ *Our Father, who art in heaven;*” and it fell to the lot of Mr. Booth to close the whole with a discourse on the word “ AMEN,” which was delivered at Mr. Button’s Meeting, in Dean-street, Southwark, November 20th, and published, probably at the request of the

hearers, in the following year, under the title of
 “THE AMEN TO SOCIAL PRAYER ILLUSTRATED
 AND IMPROVED.”

The attentive reader will recollect, that Mr. Booth had entered his protest in very strong terms, against the practice of “selecting for texts mere scraps of scripture language,” and has even ridiculed the idea of preaching from a single word, in the quotation already introduced into this narrative from his *Essay on the Kingdom of Christ*.* It may easily be imagined, therefore, that the task allotted him upon this occasion, would excite no inconsiderable share of merriment among his friends. He obviously felt the delicacy of his situation, but his good sense and sober judgment extricated him from the embarrassment of it with little difficulty. The following extract from the introduction to his sermon, is sufficiently explanatory of the circumstances alluded to, and prevents the necessity of further comment:

“The graciously condescending character of God, which constitutes the introduction to this Divine Pattern of prayer; the various petitions contained in it; and the doxology subjoined; having all been discussed by my brethren, in the course of this monthly exercise; the concluding and emphatical term AMEN, and that only, now remains for our

* See page 64.

consideration. But, so concise and so singular is my Text, that, it is highly probable, I should never have appeared with it in any pulpit, had it not been chosen for me on the present occasion. Nay, when I first heard that this detached and single word was allotted for me, I could not forbear to hesitate: because I have long detested the thought of selecting any part of sacred scripture, to be the subject of a *trial of skill*, in order to excite popular curiosity, and to afford amusement. For such conduct deserves the most marked reprobation; as being a disgrace to the pulpit, and a profanation of the sacred ministry.—But when I reflected on the meaning of the word *Amen*; on the solemn connection in which it stands; and on its being, of itself, a sentence; I acquiesced in the choice which my brethren had made for me. Because, though the Text be extremely concise, and very singular; yet the subject is of considerable importance, to both ministers of the word, and private Christians. Totally banishing from our minds, therefore, all vain curiosity, and every trifling thought; let us, with devout solemnity, and as in the presence of God, proceed to consider *the meaning* of the expressive term, as here used; and *the edifying truths* which are suggested by it.”

In this truly excellent sermon the preacher remarks, that

“ It was customary in the Apostolic churches, when he who led the worship concluded a devotional address to God, for all the Christians that composed the assembly to unite, either audibly, or mentally, in saying *Amen*—That this was practised, not only by churches which consisted

principally of Jewish converts, who might be supposed to have transferred the usage from the synagogue worship; but also in the Gentile churches; of which number was the church at Corinth—And that it had the sanction of divine authority: for the inspired writer *argues* on this very ground, when reproving the misapplication of an extraordinary spiritual gift.—This practice in the primitive churches receiving a divine sanction, as relating to New Testament worship, has the force of an express apostolic precept, or of divine law: and, consequently, being of a moral nature, it must be equally the duty of those individuals who constitute a worshipping assembly *now*, as it was of the church at Corinth, to unite in subjoining their solemn *Amen*, at the close of a devotional address to God.”

It is remarked by Dr. Rippon, who must have intimately known the mind of his friend on such a subject as this, that “when others conducted public prayer, where he was present, he was accustomed at the conclusion, softly, yet audibly, to subjoin his AMEN—this practice he wished might prevail in all our congregations, and at our prayer meetings; but his example and influence, considerable as they were, have not yet rendered it general.”

Having ascertained with precision, the meaning of the term, he proceeds to state the edifying truths suggested by it; and here a wide field, indeed, opens itself to his view, into which he has

entered with great animation and power. Seldom have the nature, the importance, and the privilege of prayer been handled with greater ability. We would gladly persuade ourselves, that this first-rate sermon is so well known as to render any detailed account of its contents unnecessary from us.—There is in it a rich savour of genuine Christian experience, which must powerfully recommend it to the approbation of those, whose religion does not consist in empty speculations—of the truth of which, the following extract is a sufficient proof:

“ It is evident, from what has been said, that when any one appears as the organ of an assembly, to present their united requests to God, the situation in which he stands is peculiarly solemn. Of this, I trust, not only my brethren in the ministry now present; but many others in this congregation, have been long apprized: and yet, perhaps, none of us have realized the fact as we ought.—Is a minister of Christ under indispensable obligations, when expounding the divine oracles, to be conscientiously cautious, that he do not misinterpret and misapply the language of God to *men*? and is he not bound to be cautious of misrepresenting the character and state, the wants and supplies, the fears and the hopes, the sorrows and the joys of his fellow-men, when unitedly speaking to God; that those who are devout in the exercise may feel their interest, more or less, in all he expresses?—Besides, voluntarily and professedly to appear before the Divine Majesty, guilty, corrupt, and unworthy, as we are—To approach Him, in whose pre-

sence those morning stars, those children of light and love, the Seraphim, veil their faces and cover their feet—To draw near to HIM, though as on *the throne of grace*, and by the blood of Jesus, who *is a consuming fire*—To address HIM in prayer, not as a detached individual, but as presenting the confessions, requests, and thanks, of the whole assembly; as directing the intercessions of each worshipper in the congregation, for all the churches of Christ upon earth—for the civil Government under which we live—for the millions of our fellow-mortals that *lie in wickedness*; and all this with a view to the united and solemn Amen of the whole assembly; must constitute a situation that is very solemn, and very important. So solemn and so important is it, as justly to excite similar feelings with those of the revering Patriarch, when he said; *how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* Surely, then, my ministering brethren, whenever thus employed, we must stand in the greatest need of *grace*, or of Divine influence, *that we may serve God acceptably*; and be the happy means of exciting, promoting, inflaming, devout affections in the hearts of all those who unite with us!

“ Yes, my brethren, *we*, in a particular manner, are under an imperious necessity of having Divine assistance in the sacred service, lest, in leading the public devotion, we should sink into habitual formality—lest we should be contented with employing our gifts in prayer, as *ministers*, without exercising our graces in prayer, as *Christians*.—For dreadful is the state of that minister, who is not much on his guard, in this respect! because the frequent recur-

rence of seasons for conducting social prayer, not only in public, but also in his own family, in the families of his friends, and when visiting the sick; has, through natural depravity, a tendency to produce an *unhallowed familiarity* with prayer, and with God—a familiarity, without self-abasement, without faith, without fervour, and without delight.

“ My brethren will not be offended, if I should add, there is great reason to suspect, and to mourn over the suspicion, that the inattention and formality in our assemblies, when we are leading their devotion, are too often partly owing to our *own* want of deep solemnity, of holy ardour, and of spiritual savour, in the exercise. Though daily constrained to lament the want of more spirituality in our secret devotions, and bound to labour for it; we should be still more solicitous in public prayer, when leading the worship, to possess a large degree of clearness in our conceptions; of reverence in our adorations; of self-abasement in our confessions; of earnestness in our petitions: of gratitude in our thanksgivings; and of sacred unction through the whole: because the devotion of many others is much concerned, on such occasions, in the apparent frame of *our* hearts; in the language of *our* lips; and, perhaps, on reflection, in *our* example.

“ Nor is it, under God, of small importance to our usefulness, when officiating as the mouth of a congregation, in prayer, that the rectitude of our conduct, and the piety of our character, be unimpeached and unsuspected, by those who are present, and should add their solemn Amen. For if the conduct of a minister be stained by known

immorality, or his religious character be considered as doubtful; those who unite with him, whatever appearance of devotion there may be in his prayers, will probably have many unpleasing thoughts at the time, arise in their minds respecting him, that will greatly interfere with a devotional frame.

“ Of all the religious professors on earth, none have so many powerful motives to holiness of heart and life—to spirituality and heavenly-mindedness; or to lead the exercises of social supplication with deep devotion, as a minister of the word. For as, to suitable petitions in prayer, the habitual dispositions of any man’s heart, and the tenor of his conduct, ought always to be in complete unison; so should it be, in a more especial manner, with regard to a professed minister of Christ. Because, whether he stand up in a congregation to interpret the Divine Oracles, or to be the mouth in prayer, he should appear, and be recognized, as A MAN OF GOD—much more venerable for his *Christian* character, than for his *ministerial* office. The former being permanent, and stamping his destiny for eternity: the latter transient, and may be annihilated in a moment.—How it is with you, my ministering brethren, I do not know; but, as to myself, when reflecting on the numerous obligations under which I am, to be entirely devoted to God; and on the multiplied motives I have, to exemplary holiness, and heavenly-mindedness—motives arising from my Christian profession, my public ministry, my pastoral office, my hoary hairs, and from a vast variety of other sources; my own Sermons reprove me; my daily prayers reprove me; and I feel myself deeply convicted

before God. Were it not, therefore, for that relief which is administered by the atonement and intercession of Jesus Christ, I should be utterly confounded—I should sink in despair.

“ It is evident from the nature of things, that prayer, in the present state, is an indispensable duty, and essential to real godliness. Totally to neglect it, therefore, suits the character of none but an Atheist: because it is a tacit denial of the Divine dominion, and the Divine existence.—Nor is prayer, whether social or secret; whether stated, occasional, or ejaculatory, a mere duty. It is also a privilege. Yes, on evangelical principles, it is a very important privilege. For it is a grand mean of spiritual edification; or of invigorating the graces of Christianity, when produced in our hearts. No ordinance of holy worship, nor any exercise of the human mind, being more adapted to cultivate the principles of real piety, in any person that is born again. It must, therefore, be considered, as an admirable mean of promoting holiness, and of increasing happiness, in this evil world.

“ Solemn and frequent prayer is adapted, for instance, To maintain on the mind a devout sense of our entire dependence on God; of his dominion over us; and of our accountableness to him, as the Moral Governor of the world—To excite reverence of his majesty, his justice, and his purity—To promote the exercise of self-abasement, of contrition, or of godly sorrow for sin, before him—To endear the atonement and intercession of Jesus; being conscious that we are sinners, and knowing that he, to whom we pray, *is a consuming fire*—To increase our desire of sanctifying

influence, and of conformity to the Redeemer's image—To prepare our hearts for a thankful reception of the blessings that are necessary for us—To promote, by interceding for others, the exercise of brotherly love, to real Christians; and of the social, benevolent affections, toward all mankind—To habituate and familiarize ourselves in filial communion with God—To be a mean of enjoying those heavenly foretastes, those refined pleasures, which nothing but fellowship with the Father and the Son can possibly afford—To prepare us, as well for arduous duties, as for painful conflicts, here; and to mature us for a joyful departure hence, into the state of celestial blessedness. For, as before observed, ‘he who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays.’

“Such being the happy tendencies of real prayer, to promote the vigour of true piety; were our hearts perfectly right with God, all our mental powers, and all the energies of our souls, would unite their exertions, from day to day, at the throne of grace. But though, at some bright intervals, in our devotions, we feel ourselves near to God, and our hearts enlarged with holy affections toward him, as revealed in Jesus; though, at such seasons, we behold his glory—are delighted in his presence—and sink, as it were, into nothing before him; rejoicing that he reigns—that we are in his hands—that he always executes his own pleasure—that our immortal happiness depends entirely on his favour—and that HE is the ETERNAL ALL: yet, alas! how soon are those beatifying moments elapsed! Nay, my brethren, too frequently, when addressing the Father of mercies, our minds are dark, and our pious affections

are dormant. The sources of godly sorrow seem to be exhausted, and the joys of communion with our heavenly Father are far from us. We treat him without reverence, without confidence, and without delight: as if he were little superior to a dumb idol, that neither cares, nor knows, how he is worshipped. Thus we make work for bitter grief, and sorrowful confessions.—Or, if not sunk so low in devotional exercises, our thoughts are frequently so volatile, so unmanageable, and so wandering; our endeavours to rouse the principles of devotion into exercise, are so feeble and so inefficacious; that there is very little which savours of true piety in our prayers, except the conflict with our own corruptions, and perhaps a concluding, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* or the ardent exclamation of an Apostle; *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Such is the undistorted representation of the manner in which our devotional duties are too frequently discharged.

“But, shall I, my brethren, or shall you, when conscious of these abominations in our prayers, content ourselves with saying; ‘Alas! we are so depraved, that, without divine assistance, we cannot do otherwise;’ without watching, supplicating, agonizing against them? Far be it! The fault is in *us*—even in our *very hearts*—and, therefore we should take the shame. The blame belongs to *us*, and therefore we should condemn ourselves. Instead, then, of consoling ourselves, when convicted of such evils, by adverting to the language of our Lord, *Without me ye can do nothing*; we should first endeavour to humble ourselves in the dust before God, on account of that *innate corruption*

which renders divine assistance absolutely necessary for us; and then seek the encouragement that is exhibited by sovereign grace."

The next publication which we are called to notice, is a Sermon, preached by our author in Mr. Timothy Thomas's Meeting-house, near Devonshire-square, at the Baptist Monthly Meeting, Sept. 22, 1803, and published soon afterwards, under the title of "**DIVINE JUSTICE ESSENTIAL TO THE DIVINE CHARACTER;**"—from Ps. lxxxix. 14. It would be fastidious to attempt to conceal, that, to the consideration of this important subject, he was led by the publication of certain peculiar sentiments, by one of the ministers of his own denomination,—Mr. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering.—This writer, by several tracts which he had at different times sent into the world, and by the very leading part he had taken in regard to the Baptist Mission to Bengal, had certainly acquired a considerable share of popularity among the Dissenters, nor is it meant to deny that many valuable things are to be found in his writings. It must at the same time be owned, that, of late years, he has alarmed many of his friends, by what has been thought, a verging, if not to Arminianism, yet certainly into Baxterianism. In the earlier part of his life, he had defended the doctrine of particular

Redemption against the advocates of the Universal scheme, with invincible force of argument,* proving, from the promises made to Christ, of the certain efficacy of his death—from the characters under which he died, viz. that of a Shepherd, a Husband, a Surety, and a Sacrifice—from the circumstance, that the effects which are ascribed to the death of *Christ* do not terminate on all mankind—from the tenor of the new covenant—from the intercession of Christ, as well as from the scripture doctrine of Election, and the character of the Redeemed in the world above, that there was a certain, absolute, and consequently limited design in the death of Christ, securing the salvation of all those, and only those, who are finally saved. But, notwithstanding these important grounds of argumentation, in a late edition of his “Gospel worthy of all Acceptation,” in discussing the question wherein consists the peculiarity of Redemption, he discards them all, and fixes it solely “in the sovereign pleasure of God with regard to its application.”

This sentiment appeared to Mr. Booth, as it certainly does to many others, a virtual denial of

* See his “Defence of a Treatise entitled the Gospel worthy of all Acceptation,” &c. particularly the reply to Philanthropos, page 46—75. Buckland, 1787.

the doctrines of Election and Redemption; or at least a denial that there is any inseparable connection between Redemption and its application—between the death of Christ and the salvation of all for whom he died. His grand object, therefore, in this discourse, is to show that “justice is essential to the divine character”—that the death of the Son of God is to be viewed under the notion of a sacrifice for sin, the proper effect of which is atonement—that it was the ransom price of redemption, and that in his awful and complicated sufferings unto death, he sustained the punishment due unto his people’s iniquities, yielding a complete satisfaction to divine justice for the boundless evil of their transgressions. In this part of the Sermon, the author has evidently in view a confutation of the Socinian hypothesis; but having discussed those positions, he next proceeds to prove, “from the doctrine of divine justice, as it respects the atonement of Christ, that Redemption by his blood is not general, but particular, and peculiar to the chosen of God.” It is, however, in an Appendix to his Sermon, that he applies himself more immediately to the examination of Mr. Fuller’s sentiment. After stating the doctrine which is the subject of his animadversions, he proceeds to remark, 1. That this reconciling ex-

pedient confounds the *atonement* itself with its *application* to the sinner—whereas the term *application* always supposes the *existence* of the thing applied—that the atonement, therefore, must be considered as *existing*, either actually, or in the divine decree—before it can be applied to the sinner. 2. That this position confounds the work which is peculiar to Christ, in the execution of his priestly office, with the work of the Holy Spirit—the fruit of sacrificial blood with the effect of a sacred energy. The atonement, he very properly observes, was made *without* us; the application of it is by a work *within* us. 3. That if “the particularity of the atonement consist in the sovereign pleasure of God, with regard to its application; we are necessarily led to conclude, that we have more abundant reason to admire the love of the Divine Father in the gift and work of the Holy Spirit, than in the gift of his own Son, and in delivering him up to the death of the cross—whereas, all the declarations of the holy Apostles run in a counter direction.” These and other arguments adduced by Mr. Booth, appear to us to confute most effectually, the novel hypothesis of his opponent, and he has illustrated and enforced them with great energy and perspicuity. Mr. Fuller had contended, “that the *principal* design

of our Lord's atonement was, *the manifestation of God's hatred to sin*; in order to render the exercise of mercy consistent with justice." "This," says Mr. Booth, "I recollect the Dutch Arminians told us long ago. But before we adopt the sentiment, it should be observed, that though the atonement made by Jesus the Son of God and the Lord of Glory, both plainly supposes, and strongly implies the divine abhorrence of sin; yet this is far from being the first, the most prominent, the characteristic idea of our Lord's death on the cross, or that on which Jesus and his Apostles, when speaking of the atonement, principally dwell.—No: the grand idea suggested to an enlightened mind by the atonement of Christ, and to which the New Testament abundantly directs our attention, is, not God's hatred to sin, but his love to sinners—not the purity of his nature, but the compassion of his heart—not his inclination to punish, but his determination to pardon." The admirers of Mr. Fuller—and we too admire his talents—may extol his prowess, and boast that he has put all his opponents into the back ground, but they must pardon us if we are hardy enough to affirm on the other part, that neither with Mr. Booth, nor with his Northern antagonist, has he hitherto reaped any thing but defeat.

The last production with which Mr. B. favoured the world, was his "PASTORAL CAUTIONS." The substance of these was addressed in 1785, in a charge to the late Mr. Thomas Hopkins, when ordained pastor of the church, in Eagle-street, Red Lion Square, London—but now greatly enlarged for publication, and calculated for more general utility. The subject is not only worthy of the pen of Mr. Booth, but it is a subject also which few men living were more competent to handle than himself. He had now been fifty years engaged in the work of the ministry, and more than thirty-five of that time, Pastor of the church, in Prescot-street, Goodman's Fields. His age, his experience, his talents, and his virtues, all united in demanding the attention of his younger brethren in the ministry, to his PASTORAL CAUTIONS. *I said days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom, Job. xxxii. 7. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I WARN YOU, 1 Cor. iv. 14.* Imagination can scarcely figure to itself a more interesting spectacle than that of the venerable Booth, advanced nearly to the age of threescore years and ten, standing as it were upon the brink of the grave—his heart filled with concern for the welfare of those churches which he was about to leave, and conscious how

much their prosperity stood connected with the prudent and exemplary conduct of their pastors and teachers—calling upon the latter individually, in the language of the Apostle, “**TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF.**” It is the aged parent unbosoming his mind to his children and friends—warning them by his counsel, animating and encouraging them by his own example, and pointing out to them how they ought to behave themselves in the house of God, the church of the living God—the pillar and ground of the truth. Let us listen for a few moments to his warning voice.

“*Take heed that your pastoral office prove not a snare to your soul,* **BY LIFTING YOU UP WITH PRIDE AND SELF-IMPORTANCE.** Forget not, that the whole of your work is ministerial; not legislative—That you are not a lord in the church; but a servant—That the New Testament attaches no honour to the character of a pastor, except in connection with his humility and benevolence, his diligence and zeal, in promoting the cause of the Great Shepherd—And, that there is no character upon earth which so ill accords with a proud, imperious, haughty spirit, as that of a Christian Pastor.

“ If not intoxicated with a conceit of your own wisdom and importance, you will not, when presiding in the management of church affairs, labour to have every motion determined according to your own inclination. For this would savour of ecclesiastical despotism; be inconsistent with the nature and spirit of Congregational Order; and

implicitly grasping at a much larger degree of power, and responsibility, than properly falls to your share.

“Nor, if this caution be duly regarded, will you consider it as an insult on either your ministerial wisdom, or your pastoral dignity, if now and then, one or another of your people, and even the most illiterate among them, should remind you of some real or supposed inadvertency or mistake, either in doctrine or in conduct; no, not though it be in blunt language, and quite unfounded. For, a readiness to take offence on such occasions, would be a bar to your own improvement; and, perhaps, in articles, relatively considered, of great importance. Nay, in such cases, to be soon irritated, though not inconsistent with shining abilities, nor yet with great success in the ministry; would, nevertheless, be an evidence of pride, and of your being, as a *Christian*, in a poor, feeble state. For, to be easily shoved out of the way, pushed down, as it were, with a straw, or caused to fall into sin, by so feeble an impulse, must be considered as an undoubted mark of great spiritual weakness. Because the health of the soul, and the vigour of the spiritual life, are to be estimated, not by our knowledge and gifts, but by the exercise of Christian graces, in cheerfully performing arduous labours; in surmounting successive difficulties; and in patiently bearing hardships, for the sake of Jesus. Yes, and in proportion to the degree of your spiritual health, will be your meekness and forbearance under those improprieties of treatment, by one and another of your people, with which you will undoubtedly meet.

“*Take heed to yourself*, RESPECTING YOUR TEMPER

AND CONDUCT IN GENERAL. Every one that calls himself a Christian should fairly represent, in his own dispositions and behaviour, the moral character of Jesus Christ. The conversation of every professor should not only be free from gross defects; it should be worthy of general imitation.— But though each member of this church be under the same *obligations* to holiness, as yourself; yet your spiritual gifts, your ministerial office, and your pastoral relation, suggest a variety of *motives* to holiness, which your people do not possess. Make it your diligent concern, therefore, to set your hearers a bright example, formed on that perfect model, the temper and conduct of Jesus Christ.

“ Yes, my brother, it is required that Pastors, in their own persons and conduct, especially in the discharge of ministerial duties, give a just representation of the doctrine they preach, and of Him in whose name they dispense it. But, in order to do this, though in an imperfect manner, what integrity, benevolence, humility, meekness, and zeal for the glory of God; what self-denial and readiness for bearing the cross; what mortification of corrupt affections and inordinate desires of earthly things; what condescension and patience; what contempt of the world, and heavenly mindedness, are necessary; not only the scripture declares, but the nature of the thing shows.

“ *Take heed to yourself, with regard to THAT SUCCESS, AND THOSE DISCOURAGEMENTS, WHICH MAY ATTEND YOUR MINISTRY.* Should a large degree of apparent success, through the favour of Heaven, accompany your labours; there will be the highest necessity to guard against pride and self-esteem. A young man, of good ministerial abili-

ties, and honoured with great usefulness, is in a delicate situation, respecting the prosperity of his own soul: for, through the want of experience and observation, such concurrence of pleasing particulars has proved to some very promising characters, the innocent occasion of disgrace and ruin. Shining abilities, and a blessing upon their labours, have rendered them popular. Popularity has intoxicated them with pride. Pride has exposed them to various temptations. Temptations have prevailed; and, either precipitated them into some enormous offence, or laid the foundation of a gradual departure from the truth, and from the practice of real piety. If the former, their character has been killed, as by the stroke of an apoplexy. If the latter, their comfort and usefulness have been destroyed, as by a consuming hectic. Agreeable to that saying, ‘Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.’

“Remember, therefore, my brother, that though it is your indispensable duty to labour and pray for prosperity in your work; yet, that a season of remarkable success, will generally prove an hour of peculiar temptation to your own soul.—*Take heed to yourself*, at such a time, and watch the secret motions of your own heart. The number of your hearers may increase, and your church may flourish; while, in your own breast, devotional affections and virtuous dispositions are greatly on the decline: nor need I inform you, that every degree of such declension has a tendency to final ruin.

“Besides, if there should be an appearance of extensive utility attending your labours, for which I sincerely pray;

you may do well to remember the old proverb, ‘All is not gold that glitters.’ Numbers there are that seem to ‘receive the word with joy,’ who, ‘in time of temptation, fall away.’ Many evangelical and popular preachers, I am very suspicious, have greatly over-rated the usefulness of their own labours. For, the longer I live, the more apprehensive I am, that the number of *real* converts, among those who profess the genuine gospel, is comparatively very small; according to the import of that alarming declaration, *Many are called, but few are chosen.*

“On the other hand, should you meet *with many and great discouragements*, take heed that you do not indulge a desponding temper, as if you had been of no use in the ministerial work. With discouragements you certainly will meet, unless Providence were to make your case an exception to the general course of things; which you have no ground to expect. Very painful discouragements, for instance, may sometimes arise, from the want of liberty and savour in your own mind, when performing public service. This, there is reason to suppose, is not uncommon. I, at least, have had frequent experience of it; and, once, to such a degree, that I began to think very seriously of giving up the ministry; supposing that the Great Shepherd had nothing further for me to do, either in the pastoral office, or in preaching the word at large.—This exercise of mind, though exceedingly painful for some weeks, was both instructive and useful. Before that well-remembered season, I had frequently *talked* about the necessity of divine influence, to render a minister savoury in his own mind, as well as profitable to others; but then I *FELT* IT.

“Be not discouraged, then, ‘as though some strange thing happened unto you,’ that never befel a real minister of Christ; if a similar trial should occur in the course of your ministry. For it may be to you, as I trust it was to me, of no inconsiderable benefit: because I reckon, that whatever curbs our pride, makes us feel our insufficiency, and sends us to the throne of grace, is at least the occasion of doing us good.—Seldom, alas! have I found any remarkable degree of savour, and of enlargement in public service, without experiencing, more or less, of self-elatement and self-gratulation on that account. Instead of complaining, therefore, that I have not more liberty in my work, nor more success attending the performance of it; I have reason to wonder at the condescending kindness of God, in that he gives to my extremely imperfect labours the least saving effect, and that he does not frequently leave me to be confounded before all my hearers. Such, brother, have been the feelings and reasonings of my own mind, and such my confessions before God, many a time.”

This is merely a specimen of the wise and salutary counsel with which this aged servant of Christ addresses his ministering brethren, in his “Pastoral Cautions,”—a work, in which, though dead, he will continue to teach and admonish them through succeeding generations.

MR. BOOTH was indebted to the Creator’s goodness for a sound constitution of body, possessing a considerable portion of stamina, and conferring

upon him as great a measure of good health as falls to the lot of mortals in general. During the far greater part of his days, he was seldom interrupted in the discharge of his pastoral duties. But when he had advanced beyond the age of sixty, the effects of his intense application to study began to be perceptible upon him. He was increasingly afflicted with the asthma, year by year, until at length, his winters, and especially the last three that he passed in this world, were severe and threatening; and he became impressed with the conviction that the time of his departure was at hand. He had sustained a severe shock about four years previous to his own dissolution, in the loss of his dear partner in life; yet so much resigned was he to the will of God, under the trying dispensation, that it surprised several of his friends. One of them having remarked the circumstance to him, he made the following memorable reply: "There is great reason for my composure and serenity. About twenty-three years ago, my wife had a severe lying-in, which so debilitated her, that we feared she would never recover her strength. Her indisposition continued about two years, which occasioned our removing so near the meeting-house. Soon after, the Lord was pleased to send the scarlet fever into the family; wife and all were

ill, except myself. Her faculties were deranged; and the Doctor said, ‘ I fear, Sir, your wife is not likely to recover.’ I attended them all myself as well as I could. The Bible was then sweeter to me than ever; yea, when I could only snatch a few verses: and I well remember one solemn transaction. In the evening I retired for private prayer, and besought the Lord that I might find an entire resignation to his will. When I arose from my knees, I felt peculiar satisfaction in the perfections of God, and had such full persuasion of his righteousness, his justice, his mercy and love, that I lifted up my eyes to heaven, and said, ‘ I give my wife, my children, my all, to thee, O God.’ And, if ever I prayed in my life, I prayed at that time. Seeing, then, he has given her to me for twenty-three years, in answer to prayer, dare I murmur now? God forbid! All recovered but the nurse; she went away, had the fever, and died.”

In the view of his departure out of this world, he made his will, the introductory part of which may here be inserted, as it serves to show the calmness and serenity of his mind, as well as the ground of his hope, in the view of appearing before the Judge of all.

“ I, Abraham Booth, Protestant Dissenting

Minister, in the parish of St. Mary, Whitechapel, London, reflecting on the uncertainty of life, do make this my last Will and Testament, in manner following:

“ Being firmly persuaded that those Doctrines which have constituted the grand subject of my public ministry, for a long course of years, are Divine Truths; being deeply sensible that all I have, and all I am, are the Lord’s, and entirely at his disposal; and being completely satisfied that his dominion is perfectly wise and righteous;— I, in the anticipation of my departing moment, cheerfully commend my Immortal Spirit into his hands, in expectation of Everlasting Life, as the Gift of Sovereign Grace, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ; and my Body I resign to the care of Providence in the silent grave, with a pleasing hope of its being raised again at the last day, in a state of perpetual vigour, beauty, and glory.”

Some months previous to his dissolution, he was taken ill in his way home from a meeting of his ministering brethren in the city. Mr. Gray, his friend and assistant in the ministry, somewhat alarmed at hearing of it, went to see him; and asking him how he felt his mind? he instantly replied, with a firm tone, “ I have no fear about

my state," and this was his answer to the affectionate inquiries of several of his fellow-labourers. Indeed, through his whole affliction, he was graciously supported in his soul. He felt no raptures, nor have we any reason to believe that he even so much as wished for them. He was generally serene, breathing after heaven, expressing his earnest desires after conformity to the image of Christ, and submission to the will of God; daily blessing him for a good hope, through grace, and waiting for the coming of his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

But though he was mostly laid aside from his public labours, the chief part of several months before his death, he employed himself in revising and completing an essay on *the Love of God to his chosen people*; and another, on *a Conduct and Character formed under the Influence of Evangelical Truth*; which have been since published. Thus he continued better and worse in his health, generally according to the state of the weather. But even in the course of his last week, he wrote two letters to his brothers in the country, taking his leave of them. Yea, he attended the Monthly Meeting for prayer and a sermon, at his own place of worship, the very Thursday before his death, though with much feebleness. He was worse on

Friday, but said to two of his dear friends, "I now live upon what I have been teaching others;" and was capable of arranging many of his papers, which he did with perfect composure. Even on the Lord's day, he was sitting up in his study. But apprehensions being entertained that his dissolution was very near, several of his friends went to see him, as they supposed, for the last time. They found him in the sweet enjoyment of the Lord's presence, and Satan kept at a distance from him. To one, he said, "Ah, Jesus Christ is, indeed, a good master." To another, in whose family he was remarkably esteemed and loved, he said, "But a little while, and I shall be with your dear father and mother." He also affectionately dropped a word, and then another, to several of his young friends, who longed just to see him. To one, "I have often borne you on my heart before the Lord; now you need to pray for me, and you must pray for yourself." Soon after, to a son of his most intimate friend's, "Take care of your precious soul; take care that you be not merely half a Christian." Referring to a well-known Socinian minister, he solemnly said to another young friend, "Beware of ——'s sentiments." Seeing him in the depths of affliction, a benevolent sister of the church asked him how it was with his

mind! he answered, in broken parts of one of Dr. Watts's verses,

“ The Gospel.....
 A faithful and unchanging God
 Lays the foundation for my hope,
 In Oaths, and Promises, and Blood.”

But it does not appear, that even then he thought his departure to be so near at hand as his family apprehended it to be; for when his friend Gutteridge, at parting, on the Lord's day afternoon, said to him, “ The Lord be with you; and if I don't see you again, I trust we shall meet in the better world!” he replied, “ I expect to see you again in this.” Nor did he express any thing to the contrary, when two of his dear children, with their husbands, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Grainger, were with him on the Lord's day evening, and took their leave of him, after one of them had engaged in family prayer with him. He was, however, put to bed about nine o'clock in the evening, and laid down, not to rise any more. On the next day, he was mostly deprived of his speech. it is thought not of his reason: but just at nine o'clock, Mr. Gray and Mr. Grainger, thinking that they did not hear him breathe, went to the bed side, and saw him lay himself quite back; when, in a moment, he *most gently* expired, without even

a struggle or sigh. This was Monday, January 27, 1806. He was in the 72d year of his age, and had been pastor of the church in Goodman's Fields, nearly thirty-seven years.*

Thus his MASTER, from above,
When the appointed hour was come,
Sent the chariot of his love,
To convey the Stranger home.

Saw ye not the wheels of fire,
And the steeds that cleft the wind?
Saw ye not his soul aspire,
When his mantle dropp'd behind?

Ye that caught it as it fell,
Bind that mantle round your breast;
So in you his meekness dwell,
So on you his Spirit rest.

Grave! the guardian of his dust,
Grave! the treasury of the skies,
Every atom of thy trust
Rests in hope again to rise.

Hark!—the judgment trumpet calls—
Soul, resume thine house of clay;
IMMORTALITY thy walls,
And ETERNITY thy day.

* Rippon's Memoir.

Thus lived, and wrote, and died, Mr. Abraham Booth; to give any adequate delineation of whose character is a task, the difficulty of which must be felt by every one who knew him, and who would attempt his biography. A faint outline is all that the present writer presumes to offer.

His imagination was fertile and lively; his understanding vigorous and acute, and his learning profound and various. His piety was unfeigned, and his deportment in all the different relationships he filled, whether as a husband, father, or member of civil society, was amiable and exemplary. His manners were gentle and unassuming, and his temper cheerful and serene. Though candid in his opinions of other men, uprightness and integrity were prominent features in his character. He abhorred deceit and flattery, and his conduct, whether in the world, in his own family, or in the church, was regulated by the precepts of Christianity.

“ His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,
A living Sermon of the truths he taught.”

He was a firm friend to religious toleration, and the sacred rights of conscience, at the same time that he was a dutiful subject to *the powers that be*. He never engaged in the political controversies of the times, nor lent his breath to blow the flames of contention. Content with that security of his

person and property which is the great end of civil government, and thankful for the privilege of worshipping his Maker agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience; he considered it his duty to submit himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; rendering unto all their dues, not merely through fear of wrath, but for conscience sake. It is, however, under the two-fold view of an Elder or Teacher in the church of Christ, and in that of an author, that we shall at present contemplate his character. In order to which, a few reflections on the more prominent features of the Christian minister, as delineated in the sacred writings, may assist us in forming a proper estimate of his worth.

Being called to *labour in the word and doctrine*, his great object should be "rightly to divide the word of truth, giving to each their portion in due season." It is manifest, that in order to a due discharge of this important duty, it is absolutely necessary that he be, himself, "a scribe well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," possessing an intimate acquaintance with divine revelation, and having the "word of Christ dwelling in him richly in all wisdom," so as by sound doctrine he be able not only to convince gainsayers, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, but, also, to hold forth the word of

life, in all its glory and excellency, proclaiming “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”* A just, a distinct, and comprehensive knowledge of the holy scriptures, must, therefore, be ever held, in point of acquired intellectual qualifications, the first and most essential in the ministerial character. It is this alone that can make an *able minister*

“That a learned education is not essential to the character of a Gospel minister, but that a good store of biblical knowledge, of almost every kind, has frequently been found of vast utility in the sacred work, are facts, which Mr. Booth very clearly stated and maintained, in a sermon before the Baptist Education Society, in London, preached in Carter Lane, Southwark, in May, 1805, on Luke x. 2: *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.* It is much to be regretted that this discourse, on a peculiarly interesting subject, is for ever lost to the public; but one part of it will long be of warm recollection among the genuine friends of the distinct Personality and proper Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, who heard it; I mean that part in which the devotional preacher, *as a dying man*, most affectionately and solemnly exhorted the *society*, and all other his serious auditors, particularly to regard the command which is given in the text, by the Infinite Redeemer, not only to pray, but to pray to HIMSELF,—*the Lord of the harvest*, that HE who promised to *send* the SPIRIT, *would* also *send forth labourers into the harvest*; as *his* thrusting them out would certainly be their *highest qualification*, and ensure to them every part of their *best success.*” Rippon’s Memoir.

of the New Testament. The sacred writings are the magazine, or storehouse from whence he must draw all the materials for the discharge of his ministry, and the fund is both rich and inexhaustible. All the foundations of true eloquence, such as extraordinary actions, rich expressions, interesting examples, comparisons and figures, are found in them in the greatest abundance. It may, therefore, be affirmed on the most solid principles, that a preacher will excel just in proportion to his acquaintance with the holy scriptures. Connected with this knowledge, however, there must be an aptness to teach, or a talent for communicating it to others, and both these were found in an eminent degree, in Mr. Booth. Of his intimate and extensive acquaintance with the sacred writings, he has left us the most indubitable proof in his various publications, which are all of them deeply imbued with the unction of divine truth. “His sermons,” as Dr. Rippon truly remarks, “were always good, often truly great, and mostly directed to the conscience; while more than a few of them, with a felicity of combination, interested the mind, the conscience and the heart, at the same moment. And, if they had not all the accompaniments of a modern elocution, of which he was, in a proper degree, unambitious;

they were delivered with that dignified *solemn* energy which gave a forcible effect to all he said—we have heard him, when every word told.—And, as all his discourses were studied, those which he delivered in the freest manner, unembarrassed by laboured recollection, were remarkably acceptable. As he entered into his sermon, and advanced, his hearers were constrained to say, “this man is in earnest; he believes what he says, and says what he believes.” There are few men living, to whom the following description of an apostolic preacher, by the amiable Cowper, could be applied with less impropriety:—

“ Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
 His master strokes, and draw from his design.
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
 In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
 And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
 And natural in gesture; much impress’d
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too; affectionate in look,
 And tender in address, as well becomes
 A messenger of Grace to guilty men.”

Nor was he less excellent in the gift of prayer, than in that of preaching. His prayers did not

partake of the nature of sermons, but were solemn addresses to Jehovah, never incoherent, nor entirely immethodical—full of confession of sin, and much resembling that of the Publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*—yet often marking the language of one who was drawing near to the altar of God, *to God his exceeding joy*. He had his errand before he went to the throne of grace, and he applied with it. It was the remark of a student from one of the colleges in America, who had been to hear Mr. Booth preach, that “when he returned home, he should have the pleasure of assuring the President and students of the college, that while in England, he had heard several ministers preach, but that he had heard *one minister pray*.”

“ ’Twas thus with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place.
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remain’d to pray.”

But the discharge of the duties of the Christian pastor, is far from being confined to the labours of the pulpit and the closet. He is called to watch for the souls of his flock, as one that must give an account to the Great Shepherd, and is anxious that he may do it with joy and not with grief.—Here, indeed, it is that the character of the truly

Christian minister appears in all its amiableness; for as one properly remarks, “if he be the real, as he is the official friend of the whole society, he need not hunt after praise, nor stoop to pick it up; it will follow him, and affix itself to his name, and his name alone will stand for a compound of excellences, the bare sound of it exciting ideas that refresh the soul.” It is under this view more especially that we are called to consider him as the follower of Christ, and as reflecting the impression of the character of HIM, who came into this world *to seek and to save that which was lost*. What humility, meekness, gentleness, patience, and self-denial is the man of God not called to the exercise of, in discharging the trust committed to him. He is to set an example to the flock in every Christian virtue, and to walk before them in all the self-denied obedience of the gospel. Not lording it over them or usurping dominion, but, like the apostle, *enduring all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*. In fulfilling the labours of love, which his office more immediately calls him to, how essential is a spirit of sympathy and kindness—that congenial feeling that melts the soul at the distress of others, and cannot be gratified without contributing every thing in its power for their

relief. *Where this disposition is wanting, the most amiable distinction of humanity is sought in vain.*— Few, comparatively, can supply the wants, and fewer still remove the pains, the disquietudes, the distresses, of their fellow mortals. In innumerable cases every human effort is vain; but there is no station in life that furnishes not, more or less, occasions for the exercise of this amiable affection, and to no persons do these occasions more frequently and seasonably occur than to the Christian pastor. In visiting his flock, he has opportunities of becoming acquainted with the temper and circumstances of the people among whom he labours, and of knowing from what events in the order of Providence their various distresses may have arisen, and when that assistance, advice and admonition, would be acceptable or useful, which at another time would be rejected or judged officious. Times of prosperity and ease, as they elate the mind from a mistaken notion of independence and superiority, too often render it inaccessible to correction, or the most friendly and interesting admonitions, which thwart present views and pursuits. Men have then an object in possession or in hope, that fills, as it were, their very souls, and leads them to draw their expectations from that quarter. But a state of distress, arising from

external calamity, or internal disorder, quite alters the scene. The pillar on which we had leaned, hath sunk under us—vain hopes deceive us no longer—every proud and angry passion is silenced—a cloud hangs over the world—every avenue to the heart is opened, and it is become tender and susceptible.* At such a moment, the faithful minister has an opportunity of throwing open all the treasures of humanity; of distributing liberally where the case requires it, of expressing his fellow sympathy, and by every tender regard, attempting to wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow! What heartfelt lectures may he not read on such occasions! What cordials may he not administer to the sinking spirits! What strength

* See, on this subject, some very judicious remarks in an elegant little volume, entitled “THE REFUGE, by the author of the Guide to Domestic Happiness,” page 229, &c. Though these volumes have now been long before the public, and have experienced the most flattering reception, and although they are productions which almost any writer would be proud to own, yet has the modesty of the author prevented him from giving his name to the public. The writer of this memoir will not, therefore, offend his delicacy by stripping the veil from his face, but he hopes for his pardon in here recording, what he knows he cannot reflect upon without satisfaction—that he had the pleasure of numbering among his confidential friends, the late Mr. Abraham Booth.

may he not communicate to the weak hands, to the feeble knees, and to the fearful heart! What healing to the wounded conscience! In a word, what seasonable, what suitable consolation may not an affectionate and able minister of the New Testament pour into the afflicted and disquieted mind! *Pleasant words*, says the wise man, *are as an honeycomb; sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.*

How exemplarily Mr. Booth deported himself in these respects, we may take from the testimony of Dr. Rippon. “As an Elder, or Christian Bishop, the people of his charge are prepared with gratitude, cheerfully to declare, that he was a pastor according to God’s own heart, which fed them with knowledge and understanding.—The members of his church found that he had the bosom of a Shepherd, and the heart of a Father. In some of their families, he was received and consulted as a parent by his offspring. All recognised in him a friend; and to the children of affliction and distress he was remarkably affectionate, remembering that when we have leaf gold to handle, we must do it tenderly. He was eminently attentive to the poor of his flock, and could always find time to call and visit them. Hence they have since his death mentioned it, with affectionate

gratitude, that if he stayed in their humble cottages but ten minutes, half the time was usually employed in prayer. Yea, he sympathized with the afflicted families belonging to other congregations. He visited many of us, and prayed with us as if we had been his own charge. Some of his prayers which he offered to God, under my roof, in seasons of affliction, can never be forgotten." *

“ Thus in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he prayed and felt for all.
And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies;
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

It is remarked by Dr. Jortin, concerning Archbishop Tillotson, that “ among many things which may be mentioned in his favour, this should not be forgotten, that of those who have passed their judgment upon him, there never was a son of absurdity, who did not dislike, or a sensible reader who did not approve, his writings.” This, however, is not exactly that kind of praise which the friend of Mr. Booth would be desirous of claiming in behalf of his publications. To deny that, among those who are disaffected to the doctrines of divine

* Rippon's Memoir, page 70.

grace, there may not be found many men of good sense and even of great learning, would be both uncandid and unjust. *Christ crucified*, has always been a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks. But *that* is the leading topic in all our author's doctrinal writings, and the motive from which he never fails to deduce the practice of godliness and humanity.

“ He preach'd the joys of heaven and pains of hell,
But on ETERNAL MERCY loved to dwell.”

The Deity and atonement of the Son of God, the perfection of his sacrifice, and the Divine good pleasure manifested therein as the import of his Resurrection,—the necessity of Divine influence to make the truth effectual in the regeneration and sanctification of sinners—the spiritual nature of Messiah's kingdom—his laws, institutions and worship, were the leading topics of his ministry, and the subjects for which he contended in his writings. His publications are all of them important and interesting. They contain nothing that is vain, or childish, or trifling—no airy speculations which merely amuse the fancy, and in which the heart has no concern. That a great proportion of them are controversial cannot be denied, but let it be remembered, that into all those he was involuntarily and reluctantly drawn; he acted not as

the aggressor, but as one upon whom necessity was laid to contend earnestly for the faith, or the purity and simplicity of the institutions of Christ. Such as are acquainted with the ecclesiastical history of this country during the last fifty years, need not be told that there has scarcely been an attempt made during that period, to corrupt the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, or the laws and ordinances of the kingdom of heaven, against which the pen of Mr. Booth was not employed to defend them. Nor let it be supposed for a moment, that there was in his disposition any fondness for controversy, any thing congenial to the temper of a fierce and sturdy polemic. The writer speaks from the best authority when he asserts, that long before his pen was laid to rest, he was wont to lament that so great a portion of his short life had been spent in the irksome task of controversy, and that he hoped never to lift it again on such an occasion—yet *that* happened to him more than once afterwards. But who shall appreciate the importance of his various exertions in this department—to his own denomination in regard to the despised ordinance of baptism, and to the Calvinist dissenters in general, as they respect some other articles of religious controversy? In illustration of this position, we might instance the

noble stand he made, a few years ago, almost single and alone, in defence of the importance and value of TRUTH, against the favourite sentiment of the late Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge,* viz. *the innocence of mental error*. “ We remember him,” says Dr. Rippon, “ at our monthly meeting

* The biographer of Mr. Booth, it is hoped, may be allowed the freedom of saying a few words respecting this ingenious, but very eccentric man. Perhaps no writer of the age has so miserably disappointed the expectations which his earliest friends had formed concerning him as Robert Robinson. To all who knew him, it is unnecessary to say that he possessed talents of no ordinary cast. From a follower of George Whitfield he became connected with the Calvinistic Baptists, and for many years was looked up to, by the whole denomination, as a leading man amongst them. Not only his residence in Cambridge, the seat of an University, but his very superior qualifications, rendered him one of the most popular preachers among the Dissenters. To a most graceful elocution, there were joined in him, exuberance of fancy, and fertility of invention, very superior powers of oratory, and a considerable portion of learning. Perhaps few people could appreciate his attainments better than Mr. Booth. He has been heard to say, that were he to chuse a companion for the liveliness of his wit, the urbanity of his manners, and the stores of general information which were treasured up in his mind, of all men living that he knew, Robinson would be the object of his choice; but that, notwithstanding these acknowledged advantages, the leading feature in his character was duplicity!

of ministers, on that text, *Buy the truth and sell it not*,—stating with an energy of mind, and a force of argument never to be forgotten, that IF ERROR BE HARMLESS, TRUTH MUST BE WORTHLESS; and with a voice, for him unusually elevated,

Indeed, we are very much afraid that the person who shall impartially review the general tenor of his life and writings, will find himself impelled to the same disagreeable conclusion.—His Notes upon “ Claude’s Essay,” which are a perpetual source of amusement and instruction, discover a strong attachment to the Calvinistic doctrines of divine grace; and his “ Plea for the Divinity of Jesus Christ,” may be ranked amongst the ablest confutations of Socinianism, which the last century has produced. He undertook to write “ the History of Baptism,” which was designed to show that the original mode of administering the ordinance was by immersion, and that the proper subjects of it were adult believers; but he ended with an attempt to prove, in his “ Ecclesiastical Researches,” that the first Christians were Unitarians or Socinians, and the last sermon he preached was from the pulpit of that redoubtable champion of Socinianism, Dr. Priestley! It will perhaps be urged in his defence, that all this may be rationally accounted for upon the principle of the gradual illumination of his mind. Those who think so are very welcome to indulge their opinion, but to us, a spirit of scepticism, is discernible in many of his writings. The reader who would wish to see the various inconsistencies which pervade his publications pointed out, has only to turn to Mr. Booth’s “ Pædobaptism Examined,” vol. 2.—2nd edition, pages 514 to 521, and he may be gratified in the highest degree. The whole is much too long to be ex-

declaring that every partisan of the innocency of mental error, is a criminal of no common atrocity, but guilty of HIGH TREASON against the Majesty of Eternal Truth." Who can presume to say, what would have been the state of the religious

tracted in this place, but we shall add a short quotation in reply to his position, that *there is no moral turpitude in mental error*.

"Were the innocence of error, which this Gentleman ascribes to an inspired Apostle, worthy of regard, we might justly consider the conduct of Pilate, when he asked, *what is truth?* but waited not for an answer, as deserving imitation, rather than censure. For though philosophers talk about the beauty of truth; though theologians dispute about the articles of truth; though inspired writers unite in displaying the glory of truth; and though the Son of God became incarnate that he might bear witness to the truth; yet, after all, this very truth deserves not a serious inquiry. A sentiment this, which becomes none but a sceptic. Persons of that character have laboured to sink the value of truth, and to exculpate error from every suspicion of harm; but that a Christian minister should boldly assert, and hold it as a kind of theological axiom, *That mental error has no moral turpitude in it*, is very extraordinary. For we may venture to affirm, that allegiance to Divine Truth requires us to abjure the principle as absurd in itself, and as deistical in its natural tendency. The language of Infidelity, when addressing the Great Supreme, is an echo to the maxim of this writer: for thus the author of *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Religion*: 'What mortals term *sin*, thou [the Most Holy] pronoucest to be only *error*; for moral evil

profession among the Dissenters in England at this moment, had the pen of Mr. Booth been dormant. But he has laboured, and others have entered into his rest!

It was once observed by a Royal Personage, concerning that great legal luminary, Sir Edward Coke, "that he had a peculiar talent in all his speeches, of mixing the pleasant with the profit-

vanishes, in some measure, from before thy more perfect sight.' (In Dr. Witherspoon's *Essays*, vol. 1. p. 59—60,) Dr. Witherspoon remarks, that "though Infidels always set out on a pretence of searching impartially after truth; yet they have unanimously agreed in putting truth and error entirely on the same footing, both as to worth and influence.' (*Ibid.* p. 95.)—How far the following observation, from the same sensible writer, will justly apply to the author upon whom I animadvert, is left with my reader. 'If freedom of inquiry be a blessing at all, it can be so for no other reason than the excellence and salutary influence of real truth, when it can be discovered. If truth and error are equally safe, nothing can be more foolish, than for a man to waste his time in endeavouring to distinguish the one from the other. What a view does it give us of the weakness of human nature, that the same persons so frequently hold inconsistent principles! How many will say the strongest things in favour of an impartial search after truth, and with the very same breath tell you, *It is of no consequence at all, either for time or eternity, whether you hold one opinion or another.* *Ut supra*, Advertisement, p. 4, 5. Edit. 2d.'

able, of embellishing his reading by his wit, and of recommending his reasoning by his spirit. Thus though he spoke often, he was always heard without satiety; though he talked with learning, he was understood with ease.”* How applicable these remarks are to the subject of this memoir, will be readily acknowledged by every candid mind who has read his controversial writings. The student who may differ from him in judgment, respecting the ordinance of Baptism, will nevertheless find in a careful perusal of his volumes on that controversy, a rich and perpetual source of entertainment and instruction; and, in the issue, be amply compensated for his labour, even though he should not be induced to embrace his opinions.

If we examine the qualities of his style, it will be found, that perspicuity and vigour are its prominent excellences. His meaning is always so obvious, that you not only may understand, but it is next to impossible that you should mistake it. It is to be regretted, however, that in his *Reign of Grace*, he seems to have too much imitated the inflated style of the celebrated HERVEY’s *Meditations*. There is occasionally a display of ornament, arising from an exuberance of epithet,

* Guthrie’s History of England, vol. 3, page 757.

which no reader of taste and discernment will ever approve, and which ill assorts with the nature of the subject on which it is bestowed. How simple, and yet how majestic is the style of the Evangelists and Apostles, speaking unto us *the great things of God!* It may be added, too, how preposterous is the idea of enhancing the sublimity of the truths of the everlasting gospel, by the meretricious tinsel of rhetoric. Who would be so absurd as to think of encreasing the brilliancy of the diamond by daubing it over with paint? It is more than probable, that Mr. Booth himself, in his riper years, was aware of the incongruity alluded to; for, certain it is, that we find much less of it in his later publications than in the *Reign of Grace*. They all of them, however, display a vigorous mind, and an understanding highly cultivated. His language is richly polished, and his sentences at once full and harmonious. And when to these excellences, we take into consideration, the valuable sentiments contained in them, no doubt can be entertained, that for succeeding ages and generations, they will engage much of the attention and esteem of the church of God, and be valued as a rich legacy bequeathed to them by their worthy author.

Mr. Booth was not only a Protestant Dissenter,

but he was a dissenter upon principle, from many things which are in too high estimation among his own brethren. Dr. Rippon gives us to understand, that the honours of one of the American colleges long awaited his acceptance, and were only kept back from an apprehension that they would have been refused by him. It is pleasing to think that his religious principles were so well understood, even in America. The reader who has perused his “Essay on the Kingdom of Christ” with attention, will not need to be informed how hostile he was to the assumption of literary titles, and to the claims of clerical importance. Quoting his favourite author, Dr. John Owen, he says, “For the title of *Reverend*, I do give notice that I very little value it, ever since I considered the saying of LUTHER; *Nunquam periclitatur Religio nisi inter Reverendissimos*,* so that [any one may] as to me, forbear it for the future, and call me as the Quakers do, and it shall suffice.” The words of his Divine Master were to him authoritative; *Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be SERVANT OF ALL.* And thus he exemplified in his own conduct, that self-denial,

* Religion is never in any danger except among the most
 REVEREND Gentlemen! ESSAY, page 43, note.

lowliness of mind, and disconformity to the course of this present evil world, which the sayings of Jesus Christ inculcate *upon all his followers*.

But on a subject so copious as this, the writer must check himself; and he shall, therefore, close this very imperfect account by subjoining a short, but interesting, and it is believed, upon the whole, very faithful sketch of the character of Mr. Booth, as given by one of his own brethren in the ministry, soon after his much lamented death.

“ *As a Christian*, he was pre-eminent, fearing the Lord above many. Called by divine grace when about twelve years of age, he experienced, no doubt, in the long course of threescore years, many changes of trials and temptations, many alternations of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow. Yet, with respect to his personal interest in the divine favour, he seems to have been carried on in an even tenor, without many remarkable elevations or depressions. His common conversation breathed much of a devotional spirit, and discovered the strong sense he had of his own sinfulness before God, and the simplicity of his dependence on the influences of the Holy Spirit. Firm in his attachment to his religious principles, he despised the popular cant about charity, and cultivated genuine candour; which is alike remote from the

laxity of latitudinarians, and the censoriousness of bigots. He was conspicuous for self-denial, and contempt of the world; walking humbly with God. His moral character was 'pure and unblemished. Perhaps there never was a man of more stern, unbending integrity: he would have been admired and revered by *Aristides the Just*. Sincerity clear as crystal, consistency with himself, and unbroken uniformity of conduct were always to be seen by the ten thousand eyes that were continually fixed upon him. He was temperate, even to abstemiousness: in fortitude "bold as a lion." Caution was interwoven with the texture of his mind; yet he would sometimes say, 'We have need of caution against caution itself, lest we be over-cautious.' He once observed, that 'in morals, integrity holds the first place, benevolence the second, and prudence the third.—Where the first is not, the second cannot be; and where the third is not, the other two will often be brought into suspicion.' In his attendance on public worship, he was remarkable for an exemplary punctuality. In the weekly meeting of ministers, and the monthly meeting of ministers and churches, if he were not with them precisely at the appointed hour (which very rarely happened) they did not expect him at all. His manners were

simple, grave, and unaffected; frequently enlivened with an agreeable pleasantry. It was edifying and delightful to observe how he perpetually breathed after more conformity to Christ—more heavenly-mindedness. That man must either have been extremely wise or extremely foolish, who could spend an hour in his company without being made wiser and better.

“ *As a Divine*, he was a star of the first magnitude. A Protestant, and a Protestant Dissenter, on principle, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Baptist denomination to which he belonged. A Calvinist, and in some particulars approaching what is called High-Calvinism, but he has sometimes declared, as many other great men have done, that he never saw any human system, which he could fully and entirely adopt. From the pulpit, his sermons were plain and textual, not systematic, highly instructive, always savoury and acceptable to persons of evangelical taste; for, the Glory, the Government, and the Grace of Christ were his favourite themes. He aimed to counteract, with equal care, self-righteous legality on the one hand, and on the other, Antinomian licentiousness. Such was the excellence of his personal character, that he needed not the arts of the orator and the graces of elocution to gain attention.

His audience listened with profound veneration, and hung upon his lips. He had the gift of prayer in a very high degree, and whoever heard him was powerfully impressed with the idea that he was a man who prayed much in secret.—From the press, he appeared to the greatest advantage. Nor will it be denied by any, that his writings are very elaborate and exquisitely polished. No bagatelles, no airy speculations—all solid and useful. His “*Reign of Grace*,” and indeed all his works, will continue to instruct and delight the Christian world to the end of time.

“*As a Christian Pastor*, he shone with distinguished lustre. Every member of the church in which he presided, had a share in his affection. The poor were as welcome to his advice and assistance as the rich: and his faithful reproofs were given, without partiality to either, as occasion required. It was justly remarked at his grave, that he has unintentionally drawn his own picture, in his sermon, entitled, “*Pastoral Cautions*.” He was not a lord over God’s heritage. It has been said that he appeared always willing to give up almost every thing to the decision of the church; and the consequence was, the church gave up almost every to *his* decision. His attention to the poor and the afflicted of his congregation was

highly exemplary. Nor did he content himself with saying, “ Be ye warmed, and be ye filled,” but liberally contributed to the supply of their wants, according to his ability. The economical system he established at home, furnished him with a considerable fund for charitable uses abroad.—His charity was never ostentatious—none but the omniscient eye knew the extent of it, and therefore it is impossible to say how many of the sons and daughters of affliction have lost, by his death, a most generous benefactor.

“ *As a Literary Man*, he was generally acknowledged to belong to the first class among Protestant Dissenters. Without the advantages of a liberal education, he had cut his own way, by the force of a strong, keen mind, through rocks and deserts. His memory was amazingly tenacious; his reasoning powers acute; his apprehension quick; his deliberation cool and patient; his determination slow and decided. His application must have been very intense; to which his vigorous and robust constitution of body was happily subservient. Though he perused a prodigious multitude of books, and respected the opinions of wise and learned men, he ever maintained a sublime independence of mind, and thought for himself. His knowledge of languages was very considerable.

Not many of the *literati* of this country have had so intimate an acquaintance with the grace and force of words, or have written with such correctness and energy united. Yet he has been heard to say, that he had a wife and family before he knew any thing of the theory of English grammar. He was not unacquainted with the Greek and Roman classics; they were, however, by no means his favourite authors. It would surprise the public to know what loads of ponderous latin quartos he read of French, Dutch, and German Divines! The Greek Testament he went through nearly fifty times, by the simple expedient of reading one chapter every morning, the first thing, not so much for the purpose of criticism as of devotion. General science and literature claimed a share of his attention, and every one was astonished to observe the fund of information he possessed on all subjects. In History, civil and ecclesiastical—in antiquities, Jewish and Christian—in theological controversy and the creeds of all denominations, he was equalled by few, and excelled by none.—It is pleasing to recollect, that all his learning was solemnly consecrated to the cross of Christ; and that, while he was disgusted, as he often was, with the illiteracy and ignorance of books which he perceived even among educated preachers in many

instances, he was very far from supposing human literature to be essential to the gospel-ministry.

“ *As a universal friend and counsellor*, he was exceedingly beloved. His extensive and diversified knowledge, his well-tryed integrity, his penetration, prudence and benevolence, occasioned numberless applications for his counsel, not merely from the Baptists, but from Christians of almost all parties. Difficult texts of scripture, knotty points of controversy, disputes in churches and private cases of conscience were laid before him in abundance. Seldom was there an appeal made to the judgment of any other man. It was like “taking counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter.” Yet he was no dictator. When he had patiently heard the case, and candidly given his opinion, he would usually say, ‘Consult other friends, and then judge for yourself.’ Such a degree of majesty attended him, plain as he was in exterior, that if he sat down with you but a few minutes, you could not help feeling that you had a prince or a great man in the house. It would sometimes appear to strangers that he was deficient in that winning grace which accompanies softness and sweetness of manner; but those who were most intimately acquainted with him, are fully

prepared to say, there was in general, the greatest delicacy of genuine politeness in his conduct.—Many young ministers, will long deplore their loss. Never surely can they forget how readily he granted them access to him at all times—how kindly he counselled them in their difficulties—how faithfully he warned them of their dangers! With a mournful pleasure they shall often recollect his gentleness in correcting their mistakes—his tenderness in imploring the divine benediction upon them—his cordial congratulations when he witnessed their prosperity!”*

Of the high estimation in which Mr. Booth was held by the Church of which he had long been the faithful and laborious pastor, ample proof was given at the settlement of Mr. Stevens, their present minister: and the writer of these Memoirs is happy in having it in his power to transmit to the world, a testimony not less honourable to the church, than respectful to the memory of the man whom Christians of every denomination united to esteem.

“My attention,” said a respectable Officer of the Church, “is naturally directed on this occa-

* **NEWMAN'S SERMON** on the Work and Reward of faithful **Deacons**. Appendix, page 41.


sion, to the death of our late venerable Pastor, Mr. Abraham Booth;—an event which, although not wholly unexpected, was a providence of a truly afflictive nature. Yes, the departure from this world, of him who, for more than thirty-six years, had broken the bread of life within these walls, must have been felt as a separation painful to his surviving friends, and especially to his bereaved people; and pregnant with important consequences in various respects.—His mortal remains are now cold in death! No more is that voice to be heard, which had so faithfully warned the sinner to flee from the wrath to come! which had so zealously asserted the honours of divine grace in the salvation of the guilty! and so strenuously maintained the necessity of holiness to form the Christian character! Many around me can testify the zeal and integrity which marked his conduct, and that he filled up his *every* station with honour to his own character, and with benefit to others. As a *Christian*, he was truly exemplary. Like Enoch *He walked with God*. As a *Minister*, he was fervent and devotional—*a burning and a shining light*,—not a meteor to *dazzle* and *expire*, but a *steady flame* increasing in brightness, *shining more and more unto the perfect day*. As a *Pastor*, you, my brethren, who knew and rightly valued his excel-

lences, can bear witness to his worth. The poor of his flock can testify his kindness and attention: his ear was open to their complaints, and his heart devising means for their relief!—Genuine benevolence directed his willing feet to the abodes of sickness and distress! Nor less did his *prayers* and *advice* tend to comfort and animate the heart that was sorrowful and afflicted. This truly apostolic man considered the poor of his flock as essential to its being a *Church of Christ*, agreeable to those words of our Lord, *The poor ye have always with you*.—His *Deacons* are bound to acknowledge that marked respect and confidence to which he thought them entitled. His whole conduct towards them was an exemplification of that saying, “from henceforth I call you not *Servants*, but *Friends*.” May not every one of this church unite in bearing their testimony to his affectionate regard towards them—to his disinterested exertions in the cause of his Divine Master, and to his ardent desire to promote the happiness of his peculiar charge, even of the lowest member of this Christian society.—Viewed in all his relations towards us, we may truly say of him in the language of Jeremiah, *He was a PASTOR according to God’s heart, who fed his people with knowledge and understanding?* But I forbear—his image still lives in many of our

hearts, nor do we need the aid of *monumental marble to record his worth*, whilst memory continues to do its office!—When such a man dies, who but must exclaim, *A great man is fallen to-day in Israel!*—Who, that knew, and could appreciate his value to the Church of God, but must feel a pang on hearing that he is no more!—not on his own account, for he has joined the society of the blessed, but on the account of the *interest and welfare of Zion*. He was a Father and a Friend not only to this part of the family of God—not only to the denomination which had the felicity to call him their own; but to every lover of the Lord Jesus, however distinguished among men—to the cause of humanity and religion in every clime. How often have many of us heard him, with ardent devotion, pour out his supplications to GOD ALMIGHTY, on behalf of the oppressed inhabitants of Africa.—Nor less fervent was he in pleading for the fulfilment of the divine promises, in an event equally sure, though more remote, the calling in of the Jews, the seed of Abraham, the friend of God. These great and important objects were on many occasions the subject of his earnest intercession at the throne of grace—but *our fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live for ever!* Mortals die—the most eminent—

the most *useful* go to the *house appointed for all living*; but the GREAT ETERNAL lives. Jesus the King of Zion is still the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. He watches over his flock, and leads them to living fountains of water. He is at no loss for instruments to carry on and accomplish the designs of his providence in building up his Church, until the top stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of *Grace—Grace—unto it.*”

As few individuals were more respected through life than the subject of this Memoir, so it may be truly added, that not many have been more deeply lamented in quitting the stage of it. His death was improved, not only by all the ministers who belong to the Baptist Monthly Meeting in London, but many others, both in town and country, endeavoured to impress the solemn and affecting dispensation upon their respective congregations. —The loss of him, indeed, to the church on earth, will not readily be supplied; but, to his friends, it is a comfortable reflection, that, as to him, to live was Christ, so, to die was his unspeakable gain: for *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord—they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*



As a testimony of esteem for this eminent servant of Christ, the Church has erected a neat marble Tablet, with the following inscription, in the chapel in Little Prescott-street, Goodman's Fields, in which he had so long officiated as their pastor :

THIS TABLET

was erected by the Church, in grateful Remembrance
of their beloved and venerable Pastor

ABRAHAM BOOTH:

who, with unremitted Fidelity, discharged his ministerial Labours
in this place, thirty-seven Years.

As a Man, and as a Christian, he was highly and deservedly esteemed :

As a Minister, he was solemn and devout :

His addresses were perspicuous, energetic, and impressive :
they were directed to the Understanding, the Conscience, and the Heart.

Profound Knowledge, sound Wisdom, and unaffected Piety,
were strikingly exemplified

in the Conduct of this excellent Man.

In him, the poor have lost a humane and generous Benefactor;
the Afflicted and the Distressed, a wise and sympathetic Counsellor;
and this Church,

a disinterested, affectionate, and faithful Pastor :

nor will his name, or writings be forgotten,

while Evangelical Truth shall be revered, Genius admired, or Integrity respected.

He departed this Life on the 27th January, 1806,

In the 72nd year of his Age.

FINIS.

JAMES SMITH, Printer, Liverpool.

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